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No. 2

THE LEGEND OF PERSEUS

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GEORGIAN FOLK-TALES

Translated by MARJORY WARDROP

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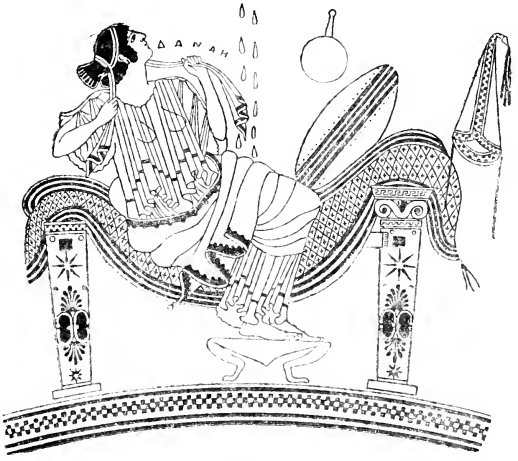
THE

A STUDY OF TRADITION IN STORY
CUSTOM AND BELIEF: BY

Edwin Sidney Hartland

F.S.A.

VOL. I.



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PREFACE

THE classical myth of Perseus belongs to a group of folk-tales ranking among the foremost in interest for the student of the evolution of human thought and human institutions. It is compounded, like other folktales, of incidents which have varied in their order and prominence, as well as in their mode of presentment, at different times and in different lands. What constitutes its importance is the fact that certain of these incidents are grounded upon ideas, universal in their range, and found fully developed in the depths of savagery, which, rising with mankind from plane to plane of civilisation, have at last been embodied in the faith and symbolism of the loftiest and most spiritual of the great religions of the world—the religion of civilised Europe. The figure of Perseus, the god-begotten, the dragon-slayer, very early became a type of the Saviour of the World; while the conception underlying the Life-token (an incident not extant in classical sources) obtained its ultimate expression in the most sacred rite of Christian worship.

In these volumes I have attempted an examination of the myth upon scientific principles. The first three

chapters of the present volume are devoted to an account of the story, as given by the poets and historians of antiquity, and in modern folklore. Taking, then, the four chief incidents in order, the remaining chapters comprise an inquiry into analogous forms of the Supernatural Birth, alike in tale and custom, throughout the world. They will be followed by similar inquiries into the incidents of the Life-token, the Rescue of Andromeda, and the Quest of the Gorgon's Head. Having thus analysed the incidents, and determined, so far as the means at my command will permit, their foundation in belief and custom, and the large part played by some of the conceptions in savage life, I shall return to the story as a whole, and, treating it as an artistic work, I shall inquire whether it be possible to ascertain what was its primitive form, where it originated, and how it became diffused over the Eastern continent.

I am deeply sensible of the difficulties of the task I have undertaken, and of the very imperfect way in which I have hitherto performed it. Unfortunately, I cannot hope to succeed better in that portion which has yet to be laid before the reader. All I can hope is that I may have exhibited, however inadequately (if further exhibition were needful), the advantage for psychological purposes of research into the ideas and the usages of uncultured peoples and of the less cultured classes in civilised communities.

My sincere thanks are due to many friends who have rendered me valuable assistance from time to time; among others to Miss Marian Roalfe Cox, who has been kind

enough to supply me with abstracts of several variants of the tale—some of them not readily accessible; to Mr. W. H. D. Rouse, M.A., and Mr. G. L. Gomme, F.S.A., President of the Folklore Society, to whom I am indebted for help on some important points; to Dr. Oscar W. Clark for calling my attention to various interesting superstitions; to the Rev. R. H. Codrington, D.D., for his ready response to my questions; and last, but not least, to Mr. Alfred Nutt, for his kindness in reading the proof-sheets, and for the suggestions and help he is so well qualified to give in many departments of folklore, particularly in all matters relating to Celtic literature and tradition. In making this acknowledgment, of course, I do not seek to shift from my own shoulders any portion of responsibility for the opinions I have expressed. In some of those opinions all the friends whose aid has been thus generously rendered would probably agree. Perhaps none of them would accept all. Our common possession is the single desire for truth and a perennial interest in everything which may cast light on the past—and the future—of humanity.

For the reader's convenience I have compiled a list of the modern works cited, with such bibliographical information as will admit of the editions used being readily identified. An index will be issued in the concluding volume; and meanwhile it is hoped the list of contents will be found to contain a sufficient analysis of the chapters.

BARNWOOD COURT, GLOUCESTER,
June 1894.

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The Vignette on the title-page is from the well-known 5th century bowl from Cacre, figured by Gerhard, Berl. Winckelmann Progr. 1854.

LIST OF SOME OF THE WORKS REFERRED TO

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THE LEGEND OF PERSEUS

CHAPTER I

THE LEGEND OF PERSEUS AS PRESERVED IN CLASSICAL WRITERS. ITS THREE TRAINS OF INCIDENT. THE DANAE TYPE OF THE STORY IN MODERN FOLKLORE.

IN *The Earthly Paradise* William Morris has made English the Doom of King Acrisius in such lovely wise, and in the main with such close adherence to the story as told by Ovid and other classical writers, as to render thankless the task of repeating it at length. But in undertaking an inquiry into the foundations and history of the legend of Perseus, it is needful to bear in mind its salient features. I shall therefore ask the reader's patience for a summary of these.

Acrisius, the son of Abas and king of Argos, having been warned by an oracle that he should die by the hands of his daughter Danae's son, built a tower of brass in which he imprisoned the maiden, that he might keep her celibate and so frustrate the oracle. Jupiter, however, visited her in a shower of gold; and she bore a son, Perseus. By the king's orders, mother and babe were enclosed in a chest and cast into the sea. The chest came to land on the island of Seriphos, and was drawn ashore by a fisherman

named Dictys. Polydectes, the king of the island, took Danae under his protection, and in process of time desired to marry her. For this purpose he found it necessary first to get rid of her son. He accordingly set him the task of cutting off and bringing to him the head of Medusa, the only mortal of the three Gorgons, hoping, of course, that he would perish in the attempt. But the youth had friends in high places. Pallas provided him with a buckler brightly polished as a mirror, Pluto with a helmet of invisibility, Mercury with his own winged shoes, and Vulcan with a sword. Thus equipped, he set out on his adventure. Reaching the dwelling of the Graiæ, he possessed himself of the single eye which these three hideous sisters owned among them and passed from hand to hand, and thus compelled them to direct him where he might find the Gorgons. The chief danger of the expedition was Medusa's power of turning to stone with a glance all who approached her. Perseus escaped this danger by coming upon her asleep, and by regarding her in his shield while he swept off her head with his sword. On his way back, with the prize deposited safely in his wallet, he visited Atlas, the giant king of Libya; but, receiving scant hospitality, he repaid it by trying the power of the Gorgon's head on the king and his servants, and so converted them into the mountain range on whose huge top the heaven with all its stars (so the gods willed) has ever since reposed. Flying thence over land and sea, he descried Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus, king of Ethiopia, and of his wife, Cassiope, bound to the rock. He descended, and learned that she was thus exposed to a marine monster to be devoured, in obedience to an oracle of Jupiter Ammon. The monster had been sent by Neptune to ravage the country, in order to revenge

a boast by Cassiope that she herself was equal to the Nereids in beauty. Perseus fought and killed the instrument of divine vengeance, and wedded Andromeda. The wedding feast, however, was disturbed by Cepheus' brother, Phineus, to whom Andromeda had been betrothed, and who, though he had stood by while she was being bound and made no effort to save her, now came with a band of followers to claim his bride from her deliverer. He attacked Perseus and broke up the banquet with a bloody fight, described in much detail by Ovid, which was only ended by the hero's producing Medusa's head and petrifying his foes. Perseus, with his bride, afterward sailed for Argos, where he restored his grandfather, who had been dethroned by Proetus, his own brother; and, passing on, he reached Seriphos just in time to save his mother, Danae, from Polydectes. He turned the tyrant to stone, and gave the realm to the faithful Dictys. The oracle in reference to Acrisius was fulfilled later, at Larissa, on the occasion of the funeral games celebrated by Teutamias, king of Thessaly, for his father. Perseus, throwing a quoit in one of the contests, accidentally struck his grandfather on the head and killed him.[1]

This is the substance of the story that engaged the genius of some of the greatest poets of antiquity. I have followed in the main Ovid's narrative; but the only parts he deals with at length are the episodes of Atlas and Andromeda. The absurdities and impossibilities of the tale were as obvious as its beauties to the ancients themselves; and many were the attempts to rationalise it. We need not concern ourselves with these. For our immediate purpose

[1] Ovid, *Metam.*, iv. 604; Strabo, x. 5; Pausanias, ii. 16; Lucian, *Sea-gods*, xiv.

the interest lies in the localisation of the different scenes and the variations we can trace of its episodes.

Perseus, like other Greek national heroes, was the object of worship. The chief seat of his cult seems to have been the isle of Seriphos, where it was believed that not only Polydektes, but also most of the inhabitants with him, were petrified by the dead Gorgon's glances. The later coinage of the island exhibited Medusa's head; and the peasants, when they find such coins now, relate that they are the coins of the first queen of the island, who dwelt in the mediæval castle upon the scarped hill above the port of Livadhi.[1] Next to Seriphos, Argos and Mykene honoured, as was natural, the hero. He had ruled the one and founded the other. The name of Mykene was believed to record the place where he dropped the sheath of his sword; and a fountain, which bore his name, marked the spot where it fell. A different derivation of the name of Mykene is given in the lost work of Ctesias the Ephesian on Perseus. He there attributes it to the bellowing (μυκηθμὸς) made by Stheno and Euryale, the sisters of Medusa, in their impotent rage against the hero, whom they pursued as blood-avengers to this spot, and here finally abandoned the pursuit as hopeless.[2] At Argos his tomb was shown; and in the forum there, beneath a barrow of earth, it was claimed that the awful trophy of his victory over the Gorgon lay—the trophy which, according to another version of the legend, was for ever fixed in Athene's shield, the most dangerous of her

[1] Pausanias, ii. 18; Bent, *The Cyclades*, 2.

[2] Pausanias, ii. 16; Plutarch, *Rivers and Mountains*, xviii., Inachus. An inscription was discovered not very long ago at Mykene, testifying to the worship of Perseus there. xxvi. *The Antiquary*, 192, citing an article by Dr. Tsoundas in the *Ephemeris Archæologike*.

weapons. Elsewhere the Argives showed a subterranean building containing a brazen bedchamber, said to have been that made by Akrisios for his daughter—a variation from the brazen tower of the story usually current.[1]

But Argos and Seriphos were not allowed to monopolise the sacred scenes of Perseus' life. The city of Ardea in Latium disputed with Seriphos the honour of being the refuge of Danae 'pregnant with almighty gold.' From her, according to Vergil, Turnus, who competed with Æneas for Lavinia's hand, derived his lineage.[2] Although Andromeda's father is described as king of Ethiopia, the general consent of antiquity laid the scene of her rescue at Joppa. Near that town was a fountain wherein the hero washed away the stains of the combat, and whose water was coloured ever after by the monster's blood.[3] Upon the rocks which bounded the haven were pointed out the marks left by the maiden's chains; and Marcus Scaurus, when ædile, brought from Joppa, and exhibited at Rome, the bones of the monster. A rumour of this event seems to have reached the forger of Sir John Maundeville's travels, for he relates that the place was still shown where the great giant Andromeda was fastened with chains before the Flood, and not only the place where he was confined, but one of his ribs measuring forty feet in length![4] It is evident that he took pains to ascertain the exact truth.

In Egypt and in Persia, the Father of History found traditions of a personage identified with Perseus. "According

[1] Pausanias, ii. 21, 23.

[2] Vergil, *Æneid*, vii. 371. See also Preller, ii. *Röm. Myth.*, 330.

[3] Pausanias, iv. 35.

[4] Josephus, *Wars*, iii. 9; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, v. 14; ix. 4; Maundeville, c. 4.

to the Persian story," he tells us, "Perseus was an Assyrian who became a Greek; his ancestors, therefore, according to them, were not Greeks. They do not admit that the forefathers of Akrisios were in any way related to Perseus, but say they were Egyptians, as the Greeks likewise testify." And elsewhere he represents Xerxes as telling the Greeks that Perses, from whom he claimed descent, was the child of Perseus, the son of Danae, and of Andromeda, the daughter of Kepheus—a statement apparently accepted by the historian, as well as by other Greek writers.[1] Both these stories probably were Assyrian in origin, and obtained currency, first among the Persians and afterwards among the Greeks, from political causes. In the latter story Kepheus is presented as the son of Bel. It is unlikely that the Achæmenian kings of Persia would have claimed descent from him, had they not been conquerors of Babylon. The Assyrian hero equated with Perseus in the former story we are fortunately enabled by recent discoveries to identify. He is no other than Gilgameš, whose name was at one time transliterated as Izdubar, the hero of the epos from the library of King Assurbanipal, preserved in an imperfect form in the British Museum. The fragments we have of the tablets do not include the hero's birth. Upon this, however, the solution of the characters embodying his name has thrown unexpected light. For Ælian the rhetorician, writing in the third century of the Christian era, has transmitted to us an account of the birth of Gilgamos, whom he styles King of the Babylonians. According to this account, the Chaldeans predicted to a monarch, whose name is variously read as Sakchoros, Senéchoros and Enéchoros, that his daughter would have a

[1] Herod. vi. 53, 54 (I quote Rawlinson's translation); vii. 61, 150.

son who would deprive his grandfather of the kingdom. Fearing this, he ordered her to be kept in close confinement. His precautions were vain, for fate was cleverer than the Babylonian king. His daughter bore a son whose father was unknown. No sooner was the infant born than her guards threw it down, for fear of the king, from the citadel wherein she was immured. But an eagle, beholding the falling child, darted beneath it, and, receiving it on its back, bore it gently to the ground in a certain garden. The gardener found the boy, and adopted him for his beauty. "If anybody think this a fable," says the rhetorician, eager to shuffle off all responsibility for it, "I admit I don't believe it myself; yet I am told that Perses the Achæmenian, from whom the noble stock of the Persians is derived, was an eagle's nursling." On examining the epos of Gilgameš we recognise none of the adventures as those of Perseus. This may be owing to its imperfect preservation, or to its being a literary recension wherein only those parts of the story proper to the writer's purpose are combined. It can hardly be that the sole resemblance is in the circumstances of the hero's birth. On the other hand, the career of Gilgameš has many points of likeness to that of Herakles.[1] He rejoices in a divine origin and in the favour of the gods; he conquers lions and monsters; he triumphantly accomplishes a journey to the other world. Now, a story of the rescue of a maiden similar to that by Perseus was told of Herakles. When Laomedon, king of Troy, had bound his daughter Hesione to a rock, to be devoured by a sea-monster sent by Poseidon, Herakles undertook her deliverance, and sprang full-armed into the fish's throat, whence

[1] Ælian, *De Nat. Anim.*, xii. 21; Jeremias, *Izdubar-Nimrod*, passim; Smith, *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, passim.

he hacked his way forth again after three days' imprisonment, hairless.[1] We are left to conjecture that, if we had the traditions of Gilgameš fully presented to us, we should not only have his birth as told by Ælian, but also some other features of his story linking it to that of Perseus—features that perhaps would at the same time explain why the king his grandfather is called an Egyptian.

Herodotus seems to have attached more credit to the tale he found in Egypt. He describes the temple to the hero at Chemmis in the canton of Thebes, and mentions the games celebrated in his honour. The Chemmites, he says, claimed Perseus as Chemmite by descent, and related that on his way from the slaughter of the Gorgon he paid a visit to their city, acknowledged them for his kinsfolk, and instituted the games. They declared that he was in the habit of appearing to them, sometimes in his temple, at other times in the open country, and that one of the sandals he had worn was often found, measuring two cubits in length; and it was a sign of prosperity to the kingdom. There was also a watch-tower called by the name of Perseus near the Canopic mouth of the Nile.[2]

But, with regard both to the Persian and to the Egyptian tales, it must be borne in mind that all classical writers had a light-hearted way of calling foreign gods and heroes by the names of their own divinities, whenever they could get an excuse for so doing in the resemblances they traced, or fancied, either in attributes or legends. This practice has introduced endless confusion into their accounts, per-

[1] Tylor, i. *Prim. Cult.*, 306, citing Tzetzes ap. Lycophron's *Cassandra*; Diodorus Sic., iv.

[2] Herod. ii. 91, 15. If we may trust Diodorus Siculus (i.), the Egyptians claimed that Perseus was born in Egypt.

functory at the best and often contemptuous, of the mythologies of other nations. If we learn little from the historian's references to the Persian, or Assyrian, tradition, we know less of that of the Egyptians; and, with all our discoveries, we have yet to find the clew to the object of veneration at Chemmis, and the legends clustered about him.

Coming down to a later period, Ælian makes mention of a fish caught in the Red Sea, and called Perseus equally by the dwellers on the shore, by the Greeks, and by the Arabs. He informs us that the latter honoured Perseus, the son of Zeus, and declared that it was from him this fish derived its name. He also describes a gigantic marine cricket, something like a rock-lobster, which many persons abstained from eating, because they deemed it sacred. The inhabitants of Seriphos, if they caught it in their nets, would not keep it, but returned it to the sea; if they found one dead, they would bury it, weeping; and they held that these creatures were dear to Perseus. The importance of these statements will appear hereafter. Another tradition of Seriphos noticed by the same writer attributes the silence of the frogs (which never croaked) on the island to the prayers of Perseus, when they disturbed his sleep on his return from the contest with Medusa.[1] The hero of the island would naturally be credited with many of its peculiarities.

The general result is that legends identical in substance with that of Perseus were widely known in ancient times. From Persia to Italy, from cultured Greece to the barbarous shores of the Red Sea, a tale was told, a hero was celebrated, identified by Greek and Roman writers with

[1] Ælian, *De Nat. Anim.*, iii. 28, 37; xiii. 26.

the son of Danae. The tale, however, was not told without variations, of which the underground chamber in the Argive territory and the escape of Danae to Ardea are specimens; while the hero's mysterious connection with a fish, or marine crustacean, points to another.

The legend consists of three leading trains of incident, namely :—

1. The Birth, including the prophecy, the precautions taken by Akrisios, the supernatural conception, the exposure of mother and babe, and the fulfilment of the prophecy by the death of Akrisios.

2. The Quest of the Gorgon's Head, including the jealousy of Polydektes, the divine gift of weapons, the visit to the Graiæ, the slaughter of Medusa, and the vengeance on Polydektes.

3. The Rescue of Andromeda, including the fight with the monster and the quelling of Phineus, the pretender to the maiden's hand.

Singly, these trains of incident appear in many traditions, sometimes in one form, sometimes in another. We shall consider them first in combination, with the object of tracing the legend in its wanderings and modifications. Afterwards, leaving out of account the surrounding details, we shall examine the central incidents, so as, if possible, to arrive at the ideas which underlie them. In other words, we shall first treat the story as a whole, and then analyse it into its component parts. A tale, however, in its passage through the world is susceptible of almost infinite modifications. It will be obviously impossible in the analysis to deal with more than a few of these; and I shall confine my attention to the above three leading trains of incident and one other, which appears in many modern versions, and

which we shall find to be not the least important and interesting of the four.

Considering the story as a story-whole, we may begin by reminding ourselves that the forms in which we receive it from Ovid and Lucian are literary forms of a pre-existing oral version. This version was probably the most widely accredited, though, as we have seen reason to think, not the only version current in classical times. And in transferring our inquiries from literature to tradition, we shall be met by variations much wider than those manifested in ancient writings. On the other hand, we shall not be left without approximations to the form with which we are familiar there.

Of these approximations, perhaps the closest was told a few years ago to Signor Giovanni Siciliano by an absolutely illiterate peasant woman of Pratovecchio in the Val d'Arno. It runs thus :—A childless king, praying for offspring, hears a voice asking him to choose between a son who will die and a daughter who will run away. By the advice of his subjects he chooses the latter ; and a daughter is accordingly born. Some miles from his city the king has a palace in the midst of a fair garden. Thither he brings the child, with nurse and maid of honour, to keep her in safety ; and he and his wife visit the little one but rarely. No sooner, however, had she arrived at the age of sixteen than the son of King Jonah, passing by, saw her and bribed her nurse to let him have access to her. The young people fell in love with one another, and were secretly married. In due time the bride gave birth to a son ; and her father, learning this, refused to see her again. When the boy was fifteen years of age he went to find his grandfather, who would not so much as speak to him. He endured this silence for three

or four months, and then demanded the reason for it, offering the king, if he would tell him, to go and cut off the Witch's head for him. The king replied that this was just what he wanted him to do. Now, the witch in question was so terrible that all who looked at her became statues; and the king hoped that the youth would perish in the adventure. But on the way he met an old man who gave him a flying steed, and directed him to a palace wherein dwelt two women who had only one eye between them, from whom he was to obtain a mirror. And the old man warned him always to regard the witch in the mirror, and never to look at her otherwise, lest he should become a statue. The flying steed carried the adventurer safely over a mountain inhabited by all sorts of wild and ravenous beasts; and he arrived in due course at the palace of the one-eyed women. There, by possessing himself of the eye while one of them was handing it to the other, he extorted the mirror which enabled him to accomplish the object of his journey. After cutting off the witch's head, he returned home another way; and coming to a seaport town he found a chapel by the sea-side, and a lovely maiden within it, clad in mourning garb and weeping. She bids him depart, lest he also be eaten by the seven-headed dragon whereto she has been offered, and whose coming she is then awaiting. He refuses to leave her. Instead of doing so, he attacks the dragon on its rising from the sea, turns it to stone, and cuts out its seven tongues, which he ties up in a handkerchief and puts in his pocket. But, having delivered the lady, he ungallantly refuses to see her home, saying that he wishes to see a little more of the world. Before leaving her, however, he makes an appointment to return in six months. This inscrutable conduct gives opportunity to a cobbler, who

meets her alone, to threaten her with death unless she will tell her father that he is the slayer of the dragon. Deprived of her champion, she is compelled to submit to the terms; but when her father offers her in marriage to her supposed deliverer, she pleads for a delay of six months. Then the king sent placards through all his cities, announcing his daughter's deliverance by a cobbler and her approaching marriage to him. Her real deliverer *hears* the placards, and returns to the capital just as the six months are expiring. He attends an audience, and inquires of the king how many heads the beast had, and whether the cobbler has any proof of his victory. The cobbler is summoned, and asked where are the dragon's seven tongues? The damsel settles the question, however, by declaring that the youth it was who slew the dragon and cut out his tongues, and that the rascal of a shoemaker had taken her by force and compelled her to say that it was he. The shoemaker is promptly burned in the great square, and the hero married. He returns with his bride to his grandfather, to whom he shows the witch's head, with the inevitable result, and then fetches his father from the garden where he had himself been born.[1]

That there should be so striking a resemblance between this story and that of the classical writers is not surprising to any one who realises the tenacity of popular traditions. It is not, indeed, necessary to suppose that it has been handed down from pagan times in Tuscany: it may only date, as a popular tale, from the revived paganism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. If so, however, it would stand alone among Italian traditions, not one of which has been traced to the great movement known as the Revival of Learning, and a large number of which were already current

[1] Pitrè, *Nov. Pop. Toscane*, 1.

while that movement was in progress. The assumption, therefore, that the Tuscan tale is a relic of two thousand years or more does not seem unwarranted. Moreover, it is confirmed by an Albanian *märchen*, obtained from the recital of a woman at Ljabovo in the district of Riça. It had been foretold, we learn, to a certain king that he should be put to death by his grandson, yet unborn. Wherefore he flung into the sea and drowned every boy born of his two daughters. The third boy, however, escaped with his life, and was cast by a wave on the shore, where he was found by two herdsmen and taken home to their wives to bring up. When he was in his twelfth year, beautiful and strong, a Lubia, or ogress, dried up all the waters; and it was prophesied that she would never let them flow again until she had eaten the king's daughter. The maiden is accordingly bound in a certain spot, to await the Lubia; but the hero of the story, accidentally finding her, learns the fate in store for her, and bids her fear not, but call him when the Lubia comes. Meanwhile he hides behind a rock, and covers himself with a cap, so that he is no longer visible. He slays the Lubia with his club; and at the same moment the waters begin again to flow. The king offers his daughter in marriage to the victor; and the hero proves his right to the reward by the possession of the Lubia's head. During the wedding games he throws his club and by mischance kills the king, thus fulfilling the prophecy, and himself becomes king in his stead.[1]

Imperfections and confusion—especially the confusion between the king who is the hero's grandfather and him who is the father of the maiden exposed to the ogress—are

[1] ii. Von Hahn, 114, 310. For particulars of the story-teller, see *ib.* 308.

to be noted in this version. They are probably due to the reporter, or perhaps, as Von Hahn (to whom the story was supplied) suggests, to defects in the telling. But it is clear withal that here, in another of the classic lands, the tale of Perseus has been preserved in its main features by oral transmission to this day. Whether it be due to the truncated character of this version that the hero's birth is not actually ascribed to a supernatural cause, it is difficult to say. In this omission it agrees with the Tuscan variant; but in both, the circumstances, though different from one another, are similar to those of Perseus. As we shall shortly meet with types of the story in which the cause and circumstances of the birth are broadly distinguishable from those of the two foregoing tales, we may classify the latter as belonging to the *Danae type*.

The Albanian tale, it will be observed, omits the Quest of the Gorgon's Head. A modern Irish saga, on the other hand, omits the rescue of Andromeda; and not only so, but modifies the supernatural birth, and identifies the hero's grandfather with the Gorgon. Tory Island was the stronghold of a warrior, Balor by name, to whom a Druid had prophesied that he should be slain by his own grandson. Balor had two eyes, but not in the usual place. One of them was in the middle of his forehead, and the other in the back of his skull. The latter was venomous, and had the property of striking dead or petrifying all on whom its glances fell, wherefore it was usually kept covered. He had also an only daughter, Ethnea, whom, in consequence of the prediction, he kept secluded in an impregnable tower on the summit of Tor-more, an inaccessible rock at the eastern end of the island; and he placed with her in the tower a company of twelve matrons, with strict orders to keep

all men, and all knowledge of men, away from her. On the mainland, opposite the island, dwelt three brothers, Gavida, a famous smith, MacSamhthiann, and MacKineely. Balor, by a trick, robbed MacKineely of a wonderful cow whereon he set a high value; and MacKineely was determined on revenge. His Leanan-sidhe, or familiar spirit, called Biroge of the Mountain, dressed him in woman's clothing, and wafted him on the wings of the storm across the Sound to the top of Tor-more, and there, knocking at the door of the tower, demanded admittance for a noble lady whom she had rescued from a tyrant. The matrons, fearing to disoblige the Banshee, admitted both to the tower. No sooner had MacKineely thus gained access to Ethnea than the Banshee, by her supernatural power, laid the twelve matrons asleep. When they awoke, the intruders were no longer there, and Ethnea had lost her maidenhood. In course of time she brought forth three sons, whom her father, on discovering, sent rolled up in a sheet, to be cast into a certain whirlpool. But on the way the pin fell out of the sheet, and one of the boys dropped into the harbour, where he was received by the Banshee and wafted safely across the Sound to his father, who sent him to be fostered by his brother Gavida. Balor, meanwhile, had learned from his Druid that MacKineely was the father of Ethnea's children, and now set forth to punish him. With a band of followers he landed at Ballyconnell, seized MacKineely, and, laying his head on a large white stone, cut it off with one blow of his sword. The blood gushed forth and penetrated the stone to its very centre, thus forming the red veins which are still shown to the traveller; for the stone was raised in 1794, on a pillar sixteen feet high, and gives its name, Clogh-an-Neely, to a district comprising two parishes. Balor

now thought himself secure, for he believed his three grandsons were all drowned. But the heir of MacKineely grew up unknown to him at Gavida's forge, and became an accomplished smith. One day Balor came to the forge to get some spears made. Gavida was absent, and his foster-son did the work. In the course of the day Balor happened to mention with pride his conquest of MacKineely. It was an evil moment for him; for the young smith, who had been nursing his revenge, watched his opportunity, and, taking a glowing rod from the furnace, thrust it through the basilisk eye and out through the other side of Balor's head, thus slaying his grandfather and fulfilling the Druid's prediction.[1]

For another story of the Danae type we must go as far as Germany; and we must piece it out as well as we can from Grimm's notes to the tale of *The Two Brothers,* of which it is given as a variant. It is related in Hesse that a king's daughter was pursued by mice, until, in order to save her, he was driven to building a tower, like the Mouse-tower of the Rhine, in the midst of the river. There she dwelt with one maid. One day a jet of water springs in through the window, and fills a tub which they set for it. Both princess and maid drink of it, and afterwards bear each a son, one of whom is called Water-Peter and the other Water-Paul. Both children are put into a chest and floated down the stream. They are rescued by a fisherman, and taught hunting. Going out together, they spare successively three animals, a bear, a lion, and a wolf: in return, each of them is gifted with one of the creature's young. They part from one another, sticking their knives into a tree at the

[1] O'Donovan, i. *Four Masters*, 18, note. The story was taken down by O'Donovan from the dictation of Shane O'Dugan in 1835.

parting-place, as a token of life or death of the owner. Water-Peter comes to a town hung with mourning for the king's daughter, who is to be offered up to a seven-headed dragon the next day. With the help of his beasts he slays the dragon; and then, having cut out its tongues, he lies down and falls asleep, he and his animals, from weariness. The king's marshal, who has been set to watch, comes and finds the dragon dead and its slayer sleeping. He kills the hero, and compels the maiden to admit that he and no other had delivered her. Now the king has promised her in marriage to any one who would save her from the dragon; but she succeeds in postponing the marriage for a year and a day. When the faithful beasts awake, they find their master dead; but happily they are able to bring him to life again by means of a magical herb. After wandering about the world he returns to the town in the nick of time, and by producing the dragon's tongues he proves that he himself is the victor, and the marshal an impostor. His own wedding to the king's daughter and the marshal's death follow; and on the king's demise Water-Peter receives the kingdom. One day, going out hunting, he loses his attendants, and at night rests with his beasts beside a fire. An old cat sitting on a tree asks if she may warm herself at the fire? When he says Yes, she gives him three of her hairs, and prays him to lay one on each of his beasts, else she will be afraid of them. As soon as he has done this, the animals die. Enraged, he is about to kill her, when she says there is a spring close by of the Water of Death, and another of the Water of Life: if he will take some of the latter and pour it over them, they will come to life again. This is accordingly done. Meanwhile, Water-Paul comes to his brother's palace, and is received by the queen

as her husband. At night, however, he lays a naked sword in the bed between himself and her. When Water-Peter returns and finds Water-Paul in his place, he kills him from jealousy; but on learning the facts he restores him with the Water of Life.[1]

The divergence between this story and that of Perseus is considerable. Not merely is the hero duplicated; the gift of weapons is transformed into the acquisition of faithful attendant animals, and the incident of the Gorgon's Head, postponed to the slaughter of the dragon, becomes a night adventure with a supernatural cat in the forest. The differences, in fact, are such as to preclude the notion of any lineal connection between them. A large proportion of the modern stories agree with that of *Water-Peter and Water-Paul* where it diverges most widely from the classical legend; and those which do not so agree differ in one way or other still further. Some of them we shall have to consider hereafter. There are, however, two other stories of the same type mentioned by Grimm, both apparently from Hesse. In the one, a king, having resolved that his daughter shall not marry, builds a house for her in the forest in the greatest solitude, where she has to dwell without ever seeing a stranger. But near the house rose a wonderful spring, whereof the maiden drank and bore two boys exactly alike, who received the names of John Waterspring and Casper Waterspring. John fights the dragon, and is brought to life again by the sap of an oak which the ants have been fetching for their dead, trampled down during the conflict. In other respects the tale contains nothing new. The second story omits the supernatural birth of the twins. It begins with a golden box, wherein two

[1] Grimm, i. *Tales*, 419.

fair boys are enclosed, falling from heaven into a fisherman's net. The dragon is killed by a poisoned seed thrown by the hero into its throat. The princess' intended bridegroom tries to poison her deliverer; but his faithful beasts discover the treachery. He is afterwards turned into stone by a witch; but his brother forces the witch to tell him by what means to bring him back to life. A wicked snake, the cause of the whole enchantment, is lying under a stone: it must be hewn in pieces, roasted at the fire, and the petrified brother smeared with its fat.[1]

There are resemblances here in some of the details to the story of Perseus. The petrifying witch in the latter of the two tales reminds us more nearly of Medusa than does the mysterious cat; while in the former the Supernatural Birth approaches the Argive tradition, though no motive is assigned for the king's resolution not to permit his daughter's marriage. The fatal prophecy, which is the centre of the whole plot in the classical tale, is, in fact, commonly omitted in modern folktales of this type. We do not find it in either of the German stories; and even in the Tuscan its force is greatly weakened. It is absent also from the Swedish *märchen* of *Silverwhite and Littlewarder*. In that story a widower-king, going to the wars, places his only daughter alone with a single waiting-woman in a tower to guard her honour. An old woman, suborned by youths who are angry at being denied access to the princess, gives her two enchanted apples. The princess and her maid, eating them, bear a son each. After seven years, when the king is expected to return, they let the boys down from the tower, that they may seek their fortunes. They meet a man who gives them each a sword and three dogs. At a

[1] Grimm, i. *Tales*, 420.

crossway they part. Silverwhite throws into the fountain that rises there his knife, given him by his mother, the princess, and charges his foster-brother, if the water become red and thick, to avenge him, for then he will be dead. Then, going on his way, by the help of his dogs he saves a king's three daughters on successive days from three sea-trolls. Having killed the trolls, he cuts out their eyeballs, and goes away. A courtier claims to be the victor, and is to be married to the youngest of the three maidens; but on the wedding-day Silverwhite appears, produces the trolls' eyeballs, and the king's daughters recognise the rings they have bound in his hair previous to the fights. He takes the place of the bridegroom, who is punished. One night the brother of the trolls calls to Silverwhite, and challenges him to combat, that he may avenge them. The troll has three dogs, but they are driven away by the hero's dogs; and the troll takes to flight also. Climbing a tree, he desires to parley, but the dogs bark furiously. In order to quiet them, he gives three hairs from his head to Silverwhite, with a request to lay them on the dogs. They lie silent and motionless; and the troll, descending from the tree, renews the contest and kills their master. Littlewarder, however, conquers the troll, and extorts from him two bottles. The water in one of these bottles restores the dead to life, that in the other holds fast whoever comes to a place where it has been spread. With the latter he binds the troll immovably; with the former he brings his foster-brother back to life. The incident of Water-Peter's jealousy follows. Silverwhite's wife has a sister conveniently ready and willing to marry Littlewarder; and so all ends happily.[1]

Only one other variant need be mentioned here. A story

[1] Cavallius, 78.

obtained in Little Russia relates that a maiden coming home from the field was seized with thirst. She saw in the road two footprints filled with water, and, drinking, felt herself immediately pregnant; for they were divine footprints. She bears two sons, who grow with wonderful rapidity, and at the age of seven go out into the world. In a forest they meet, one after another, several troops of animals—hares, foxes, wolves, bears, lions—who dissuade the precocious twins from shooting them, by bestowing on each of them one of themselves. The brothers part. The elder rescues a princess from a dragon, and suffers death at the hands of a Gipsy who has watched the combat; but he is brought to life again by his beasts with the Water of Life and Healing, and weds the princess. He observes that a fire burns all night long in a certain house. On inquiry he is told that an old snake dwells there. Accordingly he rides thither with his beasts, and fastens his horse in the courtyard to a stake furnished with golden and silver rings. He enters, and meets an old woman in an iron mortar, propelled with an iron pestle—the inconvenient but usual vehicle of the Baba Yaga (witch, or ogress) in Russian folktales. She pretends to be afraid of his animals, and bids him flourish over them two rods which lie upon the oven. As he does it they are changed to stone, together with himself and his steed. Before they parted, the two brothers had buried beneath a certain tree, the one red, the other white, wine; when the white should become red, or the red white, it would be a token of the death of him whose wine had changed colour. The younger brother now, coming to the tree, finds that his elder brother is dead, and, going to seek him, reaches his wife, and is mistaken for her husband. With the object of getting some clew to his brother's death,

he remains with her three nights, putting the sword between them every night. He then goes to the witch, for whom he is too wary. Seized by his animals, she gives him the Water of Life, which restores his brother. On the way home the elder brother strikes off his deliverer's head from jealousy; but when, at his return, his wife upbraids him concerning the sword, he recognises his wrong, and hastens the next morning to set his brother's head on his shoulders again, and sprinkle it with the Water of Life.[1]

[1] Leskien, 544, 548, citing Antoni Nowosielski, *Lud Ukrainski.*

CHAPTER II

THE STORY IN MODERN FOLKLORE—THE KING OF THE FISHES TYPE.

IN our previous chapter we have examined the classical legend of Perseus, and a few of the recently recorded popular traditions of Europe most nearly akin to it, all of which I have ventured to class together as the *Danae type*. Turn we now to another type, not less interesting and even more widely diffused, which may be called *The King of the Fishes type*, from the title of the Breton story I am about to summarise.

A poor and childless fisherman once caught in his net a fish whose scales shone like gold. He was going to put it into his basket, when, to his surprise, the fish addressed him. "I am the King of the Fishes," it said; "spare me and thou shalt find many." The fisherman accordingly let it slip back into the water, and was rewarded with a bountiful catch. His wife, however, rebuked him for letting the King of the Fishes go, and insisted on his trying again to catch it; for she desired to eat it. Accordingly, the next day he caught it again; and this time he was not to be moved by its supplications to return it to the water. Finding its prayers vain, the fish directed its captor to give its head to his wife to eat, and to throw its scales into a corner of his garden and cover them with earth, promising

that his wife should give birth to three beautiful boys with stars on their foreheads, who should be so perfectly alike that their mother herself should not be able to distinguish between them, and that from its scales should grow three rose-trees corresponding to the three children. The rose-trees were to have this property—that when either of the boys should be in danger of death, his tree should wither. The boys were born in due course, and grew up. A rumour then reached them that in a distant land was a seven-headed monster, to which every month a young maiden was given to devour; and the king of that land had promised his daughter to any one who would deliver the realm from so terrible a scourge. The eldest son set forth on the adventure, and arrived in time to rescue the princess herself from the fate of being eaten by the monster. He then married her as the reward of his valour. But this does not end the tale; for from the windows of the castle where they dwell together, he sees another castle, covered with diamonds and shining like the sun. On inquiring of his wife what it is, she tells him that it is a dangerous place; many persons have entered there, but none have been seen to return; and she prays him for her sake to beware of going thither. This, however, only excites his curiosity; so one day, without saying anything to the princess, he starts as for the chase, accompanied by a large dog. Entering the castle, he meets a wrinkled beldam, who spins as she comes towards him. He allows her to pass a thread of wool through his dog's collar. The thread is instantly changed into an iron chain; and he himself is compelled to follow her. At that moment his next brother is walking in the garden at home; and, casting his eyes on his brother's rose-tree, he sees that it

is withering. The youth understands at once that his elder brother is in mortal peril, and sets out to help him. He is received by the princess, who mistakes him for her husband; and, happening to catch sight of the castle of diamonds, he asks what it is. The princess replies that she has already told him it is a place whence no one who has once entered it ever comes forth. Immediately he suspects the truth. He makes an excuse to go out, and is joined as he sallies forth by a dog. With this animal he enters the castle, only to meet the doom that has previously befallen his brother. The youngest brother, following for the same reason, and attempting the same adventure, is more fortunate; for he resists the witch's importunities to allow her to tie up his dog, and compels her to show him his brothers, whom he finds turned into statues of stone. She restores them at his bidding to life; the three then rifle her castle and return to the princess, who is puzzled to decide which of them is her true husband.[1]

The plot as developed in this story consists of four incidents, distinguishable as—

1. The Supernatural Birth,
2. The Life-token,
3. The Dragon-slaying, and
4. The Medusa-witch.

Of these the only one we did not find in the classical legend is that of the Life-token. It has already appeared in the German, Swedish, and Russian stories cited in the last chapter. There, however, it assumed an arbitrary form: the brothers stuck their knives into a tree, or threw them into a fountain, or buried a measure of wine apiece. In

[1] Sébillot, i. *Contes Pop.*, 124 (Story No. 18).

the present type the Life-token is frequently a consequence of the Supernatural Birth; it is then inseparably connected with the hero whose well-being it indicates; it is not dependent on his will, but is, in fact, part of himself. Born with the heroes, and as inseparable from them as the Life-token, are usually also their horses and dogs, and sometimes their weapons.

In the story of *The Fisherman's Sons*, collected in Lorraine by M. Cosquin, the fish puts forth no claim to royalty. It is caught thrice ere it is finally taken home to the fisher's wife. The counsel it gives to her husband is to place some of its bones under his bitch, some under the mare, and some in the garden behind his house, and to fill three phials with its blood. When the three boys that would be born should grow up, the fisher was to give one of these phials to each of them; and if any mischance happened to either, forthwith the blood would boil. Not only does the woman give birth to three sons, but the mare also has three colts, and the bitch three puppies. From the bones in the garden sprang up three lances. The boys, when grown to manhood, set out together, each with his horse, dog, lance, and phial of blood. They separated at a crossway; and the eldest reached a village where every one was in mourning because year by year a maiden was delivered to a seven-headed monster, and the lot had fallen that year on a princess. Aided by his dog, he slays the beast, and wrapping up its seven tongues in the lady's handkerchief (which she gives him for the purpose) he bids her goodbye, and leaves her to find her way back alone to her father's castle. She meets on the way three charcoal-burners. Hearing her story, they compel her to show them the corpse of the beast, whose heads they take, and make

her swear to tell her father it was they who had killed it. The king, overjoyed, promises his daughter to one of them; but she obtains a delay of a year and a day. At the end of that time her true deliverer reaches Paris just as the marriage festivities are beginning, and sends his dog to get him of the best from the palace. The dog brings him two good dishes. The cooks complain to the king, who orders some of his guard to pursue the hound. The hero kills them all but one, whom he spares to carry back the tidings. Then he sends the dog to steal the best cakes from the king. Other guards, following the dog, share the fate of the first; and the king concludes to go himself. He brings the hero back in his carriage to the feast. Over the dessert the king calls upon every one to tell his own story—the charcoal-burners first. They of course relate that they had delivered the princess; and in proof they produce the monster's seven heads. The hero asks the king to see if the seven tongues are in the heads; but the tongues are not to be found. The hero then brings them forth in the handkerchief, which the princess at once recognises, and declares that it was he, and not the charcoal-burners, who had rescued her. The three impostors are hanged without more ado, and the fisherman's son weds the princess. After supper, when he is in the chamber with his bride, he looks out of window and beholds a castle all on fire; and she tells him, in reply to his question, that she sees it every night without being able to explain it. As soon as she is asleep, he gets up and goes out with his horse and dog to see what it is. The castle stands in the middle of a fair meadow; and there he meets a wicked old fairy who asks him to jump down from his horse and help her with a bundle of grass, that she wishes to lift upon her back.

He politely complies; but no sooner has he touched the ground than she strikes him with a wand and changes into a tuft of grass himself, his horse and his dog. His brothers find the blood in their phials boiling; and the second starts to discover what has become of the eldest. His reception by the princess as her husband, his inquiry as to the castle on fire, and his fate correspond with those of the second brother in the Breton tale. But the youngest, by refusing to come down from his horse and seizing the fairy by her hair, compels her, under threat of death, to restore his brothers to life, which she does by striking the tufts of grass with her wand. When she has finished, the youngest hero cuts her in pieces. On their return, the princess cannot tell which of the three brothers is her husband. The eldest claims her; and the two others are provided with her two sisters, of whom we thus hear for the first time.[1]

In this tale we have the additional detail of the charcoal-burners who pretend to the princess' hand on the ground that they have slain the monster. This has already appeared in some of the stories recounted in the first chapter, and is the counterpart in modern folktales of Phineus, the betrothed bridegroom who lifted no finger to avert Andromeda's fate, but came to claim her when the fight was safely over. It is not usual, however, and assuredly it is unnecessary, for the impostor to be multiplied by three. In a Tirolese tale we find a cobbler making the same preposterous claim. Here is no mention of the seven heads, the brothers are two only, and their two dogs, horses and lances, as well as themselves, are derived from the King of the Fishes. Setting out together they meet an old woman, who bestows on each of them a bottle of

[1] i. Cosquin, 60.

clear water, which will become foul when the other meets with misfortune. The day following his marriage the elder hero sees from the balcony a glittering castle, where dwells a witch. He goes thither secretly; and the witch meets him, carrying her brazier, and requests him to blow, for she is cold. He blows and is turned into stone. The younger brother, on being mistaken for his elder, lays his sword in the bed, as in the Hessian story; but the elder brother's jealousy is omitted.[1]

A Gascon variant was told to M. Bladé by an illiterate peasant-girl. Here the speaking fish directs its head to be given to the bitch, its tail to the mare; and the fisherman's wife is to eat the rest. Two puppies, two colts and two boys are the result. The twins set out together, with their horses and dogs. They part at a cross-road where a great stone cross is erected; and the life-token given by the elder to his brother is to strike the cross on his return with his sword: if blood flow out, it is a sign of misfortune. No impostor appears to claim the rescued maiden; but the hero cuts out the seven tongues and wraps them in his own handkerchief. After his marriage he walks with his wife—who is no princess, only the fairest girl of the town—in the fields, and sees a little house, which he thinks he should like to buy as a hunting-box. She bids him beware, for it has a bad reputation. This whets his curiosity, and he goes to make inquiries. Having knocked at the door, he is answered from within and told that he cannot break the door in, as he threatens to do, but the way to enter is to pull out a hair from his head and pass it through the hole for the cat. The earth swallows him as soon as he complies. The younger

[1] Schneller, 186.

brother is wiser. He passes a horse-hair through the hole, and his horse is swallowed up. Then the door opens; and he enters with his dog, slays the wicked persons within, makes his way to the cellar, and delivers thence his brother and his brother's horse. So much alike are the brothers that the lady, who has already mistaken the younger for her husband, cannot decide between the two when they both present themselves together, until the elder brother pulls out of his pocket the beast's seven tongues, which he seems meanwhile to have carried about in his handkerchief as an agreeable souvenir.[1]

The foregoing story doubtless once contained the episode of the impostor. So many are the variants wherein the episode is found, and usually associated with the seven tongues, that it is hardly likely the Gascon tale could have originally preserved the tongues merely for the purpose for which they are now kept. Occasionally indeed the impostor is detected without their aid. In the Swedish tale of *The Wonderful Pike*, told in East Gothland, the impostor is the princess' coachman; and she recognises her true deliverer by the ring she has fastened in his locks.[2] A curious Norwegian tale goes further. In it the impostor is detected in spite of his thoughtfulness in collecting the tongues. A poor woman, already rich in children, bears a son who, immediately after his birth, insists on going out to seek his fortune. He has hardly left the house when another son is born, who, quite as hastily, starts in search of his brother and overtakes him. They choose names—the younger, Lillekort (Littleshort), the elder, King Lavring—and then part, King Lavring telling his brother if ever he fall into

[1] Bladé, *Agenais*, 9 (Story No. 2); i. *Contes Pop. Gasc.*, 277.

[2] Cavallius, 348.

extreme peril (but only then) to call him by name, and he will come and help him. This is the equivalent of the Life-token. Lillekort meets a one-eyed, humpbacked old woman; he steals her eye, and only restores it in exchange for a magical sword. Erelong the adventure is twice repeated; and he gets a magical ship and the secret art of brewing a hundred lasts of malt at once. Thus armed, he takes service as a scullion in the palace; and on successive Thursday evenings he fights a five-, a ten-, and a fifteen-headed troll, to whom the princess has been promised, and slays them all. Lillekort and the trolls defy one another in a style leaving nothing to be desired. "Fire!" screamed the fifteen-headed troll. "Fire likewise!" shouted Lillekort. "Canst thou fight?" cried the troll. "If I cannot, I can learn," retorted the undaunted hero. "I'll learn thee!" cried the troll, and struck out with his iron bar so that the earth flew fifteen ells high in the air. "Fuh!" exclaimed Lillekort, "that was good! But now thou shalt see a stroke from me!" And therewithal he grasped his sword and dealt such a blow at the troll that all fifteen heads danced over the sand. After each combat Lillekort laid his head on the princess' lap and slept, and she drew over him on the first occasion a gold, on the second a silver, and on the third a brazen dress. Meanwhile the Knight Röd (or The Red, a title for the impostor which reappears in the Danish variant), who had previously undertaken her defence, came upon the scene when all was safely over, and compelled her to promise to say it was he who had rescued her. Moreover, in proof of his victory he took the tongues and lungs of the trolls in his handkerchief, but left the monsters' ships untouched. Lillekort, on the other hand, on awaking proceeded to sack the ships; and by the

gold, silver, and other precious articles they contained, he ultimately made good his claim to be the true deliverer against the trophies brought by the Knight Röd. He afterwards goes in search of the king's other daughter, held captive by a troll beneath the bottom of the sea. By means of his gift of brewing he brews beer of such enormous strength that even the trolls on tasting it fall down dead like so many flies. Both princesses then insist on marrying him. In this awkward dilemma—this extreme peril—he bethinks himself of his brother, King Lavring, whom he summons to his aid; and the ladies are suited with a husband apiece.[1]

The encounters with the one-eyed hags here fuse together into one thrice-repeated episode the divine gifts bestowed upon Perseus and the adventure with the Graiæ; but the brewing for the troll bears no resemblance to the slaughter of the Gorgon. In some variants the Medusa-witch is a relative of the monster, bent upon revenging his death. In the Swedish tale already referred to, she is the dragon's sister. In the Danish tale a cock, by his repeated crowing, keeps the hero and his bride awake for the first three nights. The bridegroom, convinced that it is no common fowl, pursues it through the forest to the sea-shore, where he had fought the sea-monster. There the cock vanishes, and an old woman appears. She beguiles the hero into accompanying her over a magical bridge across the sea to her den, and laying hairs from her head upon his horse, hound, sparrow-hawk and sword, thus rendering them harmless. Then she reveals herself as the sea-monster's mother, and revenges her loss by striking his conqueror dead with her wand. The younger brother, repeating the

[1] i. Asbjörnsen, 159 (Story No. 24); Thorpe, *Yuletide Stories*, 300.

adventure, burns the hairs, and forces the witch to restore the hero with the Water of Life. The murder of the younger by the elder brother from jealousy, and his resuscitation with the Water of Life, follow, as in many of the other variants.[1]

The Greek story of *The Little Red Mullet-Sorcerer* contains some curious variations. There the desire to eat the fish does not arise in the bosom of the fisherman's wife; but it is suggested to her by lady-friends, who amiably envy her husband's good-fortune, and refuse to believe that he is not a wizard. The fish requests to be divided between the fisherman's wife, his mare and his bitch, and that its tail be planted in the garden. From the tail two cypresses grow up, which are the life-tokens of the two boys thereafter born to the fisherman. The king's only daughter was possessed of an evil spirit. She had an awkward habit of ascending a balcony every evening and invoking the stars with insane gestures. Everybody whom she saw looking at this queer spectacle she struck with madness. The elder of the brothers, however, overcame her by stealing unawares upon her and seizing her by the hair of her head. In this way he terrified her into swearing never to do it again. When the king found his daughter in her right mind, he desired to know to whom he was indebted for her recovery; but his benefactor had fled to the inn where he was staying. Wherefore, in order to find him out, the king issued a proclamation commanding all the men in the town to pass beneath the palace windows, at one of which the princess was posted with an apple in her hand, ready to drop it on her deliverer. The latter, however, was burdened with the modesty which

[1] i. Grundtvig, 277.

often affects the heroes of folktales, and tried to evade the proclamation, but in vain. Even when he was caught and brought before the king, he refused the offer of the princess' hand: evidently he knew too much about her. He travels on, and delivers another princess from a seven-headed monster who haunts a fountain. The impostor is a charcoal-burner, discovered in the usual manner. While the princess, his wife, is bathing one day, the hero takes the opportunity of walking through some of the rooms of their castle which he has not before examined. At the end of a corridor he opens a door, and finds himself in a vast plain filled with statues of human form. He meets an old woman who hands him a stick, on taking which he is immediately petrified. His brother, warned of the witch's tricks, and going in search of him, refused the stick and set his dog on her. The dog tore her to pieces, and thus delivered his master and many others from her power. Among her effects the younger brother luckily discovered a bottle of the Water of Immortality, with which he restored to life not only his brother, but so many other persons beside that they formed an entire nation and chose him, out of gratitude, for their king.[1]

It would be tedious to relate all the variants of the tale found in Europe; nor do the minuter differences between them concern us at this moment. I am anxious merely to lay before the reader the general outlines of the plot as they are found in the more striking and important examples. For that purpose it will be needful to mention one or two more variants falling under the present type, before proceeding to consider some

[1] Legrand, 161. The story is taken from *La Grèce Continentale et la Morée*, by J. A. Buchon (Paris, 1843).

in which one or more of the essential incidents are wanting.

An Argyllshire story runs as follows:—A sea-maiden appears at the side of a fisherman's boat one day, and gives him three grains for his wife, three for the dog, three for the mare, and three to be planted behind the house, promising him three sons, three puppies, three colts, and three trees which will be his sons' life-token. In return, one of the sons is to be hers at three years of age. This period is afterwards extended first to seven, and then to fourteen years. The eldest son, who apparently is the promised one, gets a smith to forge a sword for him, and goes out upon his horse, with his dog by his side, to seek his fortune. The carcase of a sheep lay beside the road, and a great dog, a falcon and an otter were disputing over it. He divided it between these animals to their satisfaction, and each of them promised him in reward assistance in the time of need. Going onward until he reached a king's house, he took service as a cowherd; and while in this situation he slew two giants, who owned green pastures, and fed the herd upon their meadows. Now there was in the loch a great three-headed she-beast to which some one was thrown every year; and it happened that year that the lot fell on the king's daughter. Her suitor, "a great general of arms," undertook to rescue her; but when he saw "this terror of a beast" stirring far off in the midst of the loch, he took fright and slunk away. In this emergency the hero appeared; the damsel put a ring on his finger; he fought the beast and cut one of her heads off. She retired for the night beneath the waters of the loch. The deliverer sent the maiden home with the beast's head over her shoulder, but refused to accompany her. On the way she met the

general, who threatened to kill her unless she would say it was he who had cut off the monster's head. The next day the beast returned, and a second head was struck off. On the third day the hero struck off the third head and slew the beast. But each day he ungallantly allowed the princess to go home alone; the general met her as on the first day, and got the credit for the achievement. When it came to the point of marriage, however, she refused point-blank to marry any one but him who could take the heads off the withy on which the hero had strung them, without cutting it. Of course the cowherd alone succeeded. He also produced the ring, and two earrings beside, which the lady averred she had given to the man who took the heads off the beast. What became of the general is not stated: the cowherd married the king's daughter. His adventures were now fairly begun: they were far from being at an end. Another, "a more wonderfully terrible," beast came out of the loch and tore him away from his bride. By the advice of a smith (smiths are often men of more than ordinary powers and wisdom, in fairy tales) the lady spread all her jewellery out on the strand, on the spot where her husband had been captured. The bait took: in exchange for this finery the beast gave up the man. Encouraged, probably, by success, the beast, shortly after, seized the princess. Again it is the old smith who gives advice. The beast was only to be killed in one way. Her soul was in an egg, in the mouth of a trout, inside a hoodie, which was inside a white-footed hind that dwelt on an island in the midst of the loch. If the egg were broken, the beast would die. The hero invoked the help of the great dog, the falcon and the otter. The great dog caught the hind. A hoodie sprang out of her, and the falcon brought it to earth. A

trout leaped out of the hoodie into the water, and the otter brought the trout to land. The egg fell out of the trout's mouth, and the hero put his foot on it. He made the beast give up his wife, and then broke the egg. After that the hero and his wife were walking one day, and he noticed a little castle beside the loch in a wood. On inquiry, his wife warned him that no one who went thither had ever returned to tell the tale. He goes to see who dwells there; and the crone who meets him draws "the Slachdan druidhach on him, on the back of his head, and at once—there he fell." His tree accordingly withers; his next brother sets out to find his corpse, and shares his fate. The third brother is beforehand with the hag, and after a terrible tussle slays her with the "Slachdan druidhach." Then with the same weapon he strikes his brothers' corpses, and they rise to their feet. The three take the spoil and come back rejoicing.[1]

This long and not very coherent story gains a little in unity in a variant by the identification of the second and "more wonderfully terrible beast" with the sea-maiden to whom the hero had been promised ere his birth. Omitting this episode and that of the giants, we have the ordinary plot of the King of the Fishes with little change, beyond the substitution of the sea-maiden for the wizard-fish. The alteration does not affect the substance of the tale, for it matters little whether the food which results in the birth of the twin heroes be the flesh of the King of the Fishes, or some other gift of supernatural power.

The opening of the North German tale of *The Two Similar Brothers* approaches that of *The Sea-Maiden*, while

[1] i. Campbell, 71.

it also recalls one of the great stories of *The Arabian Nights*. A fisherman, casting his net into a pool, brings up, instead of fish, a little urn covered with a lid. On his opening the urn, a thick red cloud curls up from within; and before he is aware of it a big burly fellow appears in the midst of the cloud and begs to be put back into the vase. "How can I put you back," asks the fisherman, "when you are so big and the vase so little?" But the apparition prevails on him to try, promising in reward not merely a good catch of fishes, but also a casket which he must divide into six parts, whereof one is to be given to his wife, one to his horse, one to his dog, and the remaining three are to be buried under the eaves of his dwelling; but he is to beware of looking into the casket before he gets home. Thereupon the fisherman lays hands upon the apparition, finds him as collapsible as a modern travelling-bag, and soon succeeds in fastening down this fairy Jack-in-the-box once more. Flinging the vase again into the water, he cast his net, and was rewarded as the apparition had promised. Before a year had passed, the fisherman's wife had borne twin boys so much alike as to be indistinguishable. Two foals and two puppies were also added to the household; and under the eaves up-sprouted two swords, two pistols and two guns. The twins set out together. They obtained the usual helpful animals—in this case, two young bears, wolves and lions. Parting at a crossway, one of them sticks his knife into a tree; and it is agreed that they will meet there again in a year's time. Whichever of them comes first is to examine the blade of the knife: if it be rusted, that will be a token that his brother is dead. The dragon in this tale has no fewer than fourteen heads, and is beside reinforced by fourteen giants, to whom he belongs. The

hero, of course, kills them all; and the rest of the story follows the ordinary course.[1]

In the *Pentameron* the magical food is a sea-dragon's heart, which must be cooked by a pure maiden. A king who wants offspring is advised by a beggar to get this powerful medicine. When it is brought to him he gives it to a pretty maid of honour to cook. No sooner has she put it on the fire than it begins to emit a pitch-black smoke so powerful in its effects that not merely the condition of the queen who tastes the heart, but that of the maiden who cooks it, as well as of every article of furniture in the room where it is cooked, becomes interesting. The old four-post bedstead gives birth to a cradle, the chest to a little chest, the settle to a little settle, the table to a little table: nay, the very night-commode brings forth a tiny night-commode so charming and pretty that one could have kissed it! At the end of four days the queen and her maiden bear each a son, who grow up fast friends. The queen's jealousy, however, causes Canneloro, the maid's son, to leave his friend. Before departing, in a final interview with Fonzo, the queen's son, he flings his dagger on the ground, and a spring starts forth, which he declares will run clear so long as his life is clear and serene. Not satisfied with this, he sticks his sword in the earth, and there sprouts a bilberry bush from the soil as a further token. But whereas the magical elements in the opening scenes are thus grotesquely exaggerated, the central portion of the story is tamed down to a commonplace tournament, at which Canneloro wins a king's daughter. This treatment has for its purpose to throw into relief the episode of the Medusa-witch. As the Enchanted Hind, the witch

[1] Kuhn und Schwartz, 337 (*Märchen*, No. 10).

gives her name to the story. Pursuing this animal, Canneloro is met by a snowstorm, and takes refuge in a cave, where he kindles a fire. The hind he has been following appears at the door of the cave, and asks leave to come in and warm herself. To calm her fears the hero binds his dogs, his horse and his sword. The hind then changes into an ogre, who throws Canneloro into a pit, whence he is of course rescued by Fonzo.[1]

That Basile took some liberties with the story might thus be suspected from internal evidence. How slight those liberties really were has been proved by the discovery of an almost exact parallel as a folktale in the Basilicata. Even the hero's name is preserved as Cannelora. His life-tokens are a jet of water and a myrtle. He is directed at a crossway by two gardeners whose quarrel he has reconciled; and he rescues a fairy under guise of a serpent from some boys who are persecuting it and have already cut off its tail. The Medusa-witch is a golden-horned snake. The storm is a tempest of thunder and lightning, from which he takes refuge in a cavern. The snake becomes a giant and imprisons the hero, exactly as in Basile's version. Delivered by Emilio, as the queen's son is here called, together with the giant's other prisoners, he weds the fairy, who provides wives also for Emilio and the rest.[2]

In a Pisan tale of the same collection we are brought back to the talking fish of the typical story. The life-token is a bone tied to a beam in the kitchen: it sweats blood when anything untoward happens to either of the fisherman's three sons. The dragon is a fairy in the shape of a cloud that carries away a girl every year. The lot having

[1] i. Basile, 113; i. *Pentamerone*, 122.

[2] Comparetti, 199 (Story No. 46).

fallen on the king's daughter, the cloud sucks her blood through her finger, and, when she faints, carries her away. The hero, having previously obtained from three grateful animals, a lion, an eagle and an ant, the power of transforming himself into their shapes, sets out after the cloud, in the form of an eagle. The fairy-cloud could only be slain by hitting her on the forehead with an egg, which was in the body of a seven-headed tigress. The hero accomplishes this, and weds the princess. The Medusa-witch is a supernatural mist. Penetrating this, the hero is invited to play a game with some ladies. He loses, and is, with his horse and dog, turned into marble.[1] In a Tuscan variant, imperfectly recollected by the teller, the fish is an eel with two heads and two tails; the boys are twins; the tails, planted in the garden, yield two swords; and the heads, given to the bitch, produce puppies; the life-token is a cornel-tree planted by the hero before leaving home. The hero's brother, arriving in search of him, finds that he is imprisoned with his horse and dog in an enchanted castle, leaves him to his fate, and, being precisely like the unhappy prisoner in appearance, he takes possession of the princess his wife. This chivalrous conduct, however, is perhaps to be imputed rather to the teller's defective memory than to the original sin of the younger brother.[2]

When the childless fisherman, in a Lettish tale, catches a certain pike, the latter gets its freedom by giving two fishes in its stead, both of which the fisher's wife is to eat. The two boys thereafter born set out on their adventures together, and part at a cross-road, leaving as their life-token a knife sticking in an oak. The one who goes to the right

[1] Comparetti, 126 (Story No. 32); Crane, 30.

[2] De Gubernatis, 41 (Story No. 18).

spares to shoot five animals in succession, and out of gratitude they follow him. With their help he wins a princess from demons who haunt a castle; and by virtue of his victory over them he becomes king. The other brother is, for our purpose, the hero. Going to the left, he obtains similar animals, which conquer the nine-headed devil to whom a princess is to be given. The princess' coachman is the impostor; and the Medusa-witch is the mother of the nine-headed devil, who lures and petrifies the hero in revenge. He is rescued at last by his brother.[1]

A Gipsy tale from Hungary attributes the Supernatural Birth to the mother's having drunk from the two breasts of an *urme*, or fairy, who also suckled at the same time the dog and mare, and dropped milk into two holes in the earth. Each of the two boys had a golden star on his forehead; and from the earth sprang two oaks, the twins' life-tokens. The hero's horse and dog assist him in winning his bride by the performance of three tasks, the third of which is the lady's deliverance from the enchanted form of a dragon watching three golden apples. Her father then sends him to hunt for the wedding-feast, and he meets the Medusa-witch. His younger brother delivers him, with his animals, from the enchantment by means of the golden apples; and by the same means the witch is destroyed. In the fit of jealousy often found in stories of this type, the hero subsequently kills his deliverer, who is, after explanations, restored to life with a magical plant.[2]

In two Russian tales the Medusa-witch incident precedes that of the Rescue of Andromeda. One of these calls for no special mention. But in the other—from Great

[1] Auning, 79 (Story No. 132).

[2] Von Wlislocki, *Volksdicht.*, 316 (Story No. 54).

Russia—the two heroes are the sons of the king's granddaughter and her maid, born in consequence of their eating fish. The Medusa-witch is the Baba Yaga, who finds the youth sleeping on her meadow, and, giving him a hair, directs him to tie three knots in it and blow, whereupon he is, with his horse, turned to stone. His brother, having rescued him, passes on to the fight with the dragon. The life-token is a knife which runs with sweat.[1]

A Sanskrit tale departs more widely from the type than any of the foregoing. In *The Ocean of the Streams of Story*, a work of the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century of our era, Somadeva relates that a childless king sacrificed to the goddess Durgá, and did penance, to obtain a son. The goddess appeared to him in a dream, giving him two heavenly fruits, one for each of his two wives. But one of the wives, not satisfied with the prospect of one son, ate both fruits, and in due time gave birth to twins. The other wife nursed vengeance in her heart; and when the two princes attained manhood, and were sent on a warlike expedition, she forged a despatch in the king's name to the chiefs in the camp, commanding them to put both princes to death. Their maternal grandfather, however, was with the army in his capacity of royal minister. He found means to escape with them, but died of the hardships of the road; and his two grandsons made their way to the shrine of Durgá in the Vindhya Hills, where they underwent a course of fasting and asceticism to propitiate her. Pleased with their austerities, she appeared in a dream to Indívarasena, the elder brother, and presented him with a magical sword. Armed with this, he forced an entrance into the palace of the king of the

[1] Leskien, 544, 547, citing Erlenvein.

Rákshasas, or ogres, and found the mighty monarch sitting on his throne, "having a mouth terrible with tusks, with a lovely woman at his left hand, and a virgin of heavenly beauty on his right hand." Indívarasena challenged the ogre to fight, but found it useless to cut off his head, for as often as he cut it off it grew again, until he took a hint from the virgin, who made him a sign to cut the head in two after smiting it off. The treacherous virgin turned out to be the Rákshasa's sister. She had fallen in love at first sight with the valorous youth, and on his victory immediately offered herself in marriage to him. This conduct is not uncommon in Somadeva's amusing work, and is always eagerly responded to by the lucky (and polygamous) heroes. Indívarasena was no exception. He married her on the spot, and lived happily with her for some time. By virtue of his magical sword he obtained everything he wished for. In this way he got a flying chariot, and sent his brother in it to bear tidings of him to his parents. Meanwhile the other lady, who was the widow of the Rákshasa, attracted Indívarasena's attention. His wife naturally grew jealous, and in a fit of pique flung his magical sword into the fire. She hardly expected the consequence. The sword was dimmed by the fire, and her husband lay senseless on the ground. Warned by a dream at that instant, his brother returned; and on hearing the miserable woman's confession he thought he ought not to kill her, on account of her repentance; so he prepared to cut off his own head. However logical and proper this alternative may have been, the goddess interfered. He heard a voice arresting him, declaring that Durgá had struck his brother senseless—not, of course, for flirting, but for not taking enough care of the divine sword—and

directing him to propitiate her. When he complied, the sword lost its stain, and his brother regained consciousness. By a revelation as convenient as those of Mohammed, the hero then learned that both ladies had been his wives in a former existence, and therefore it was quite right for him to have both now. So they were all happy ever after—especially Indívarasena.[1]

Here we have the Supernatural Birth, the Dragon-slaying, and the Medusa-witch, though the two latter are somewhat disguised. For the Life-token a miraculous dream is substituted. And the whole is overlaid by the practices and beliefs of the revived Hinduism paramount in India after the expulsion of Buddhism.

[1] i. *Kathá*, 381.

CHAPTER III

THE REMAINING TYPES OF THE STORY.

WE have now surveyed the stories of the Danae type and those of the King of the Fishes type. There remain a large number of variants wherein one or more of the incidents are wanting. Some of these have already been mentioned. Where, as in many stories of the Danae type, the hero is not duplicated, the Life-token is not found. A few stories, however, approximate to the King of the Fishes type, but want the Life-token. We may, perhaps, class these together as *The Mermaid type*, from a variant of Campbell's Argyllshire tale, told him by an aged man in South Uist, which lays the scene in the Isle of Skye. The eldest of three sons is promised to the mermaid; and when, at the age of eighteen, he learns this, he wisely sets out for a place where there is no salt water. He divides equitably the carcase of an old horse between a lion, a wolf and a falcon, who are disputing over it, and receives in return the power to transform himself into either of their forms at pleasure, or (for Mr. Campbell was uncertain which) the promise of their help at need. By this means, when acting as a king's herd, he overcomes three giants and a giantess, and obtains three enchanted flying horses,

three splendid dresses and a washing-basin and silver comb, on using which he would become the most beautiful man in the world. He fights the "draygan" from the sea on three successive days, and rescues the king's daughter. The latter afterwards recognises him by a scratch that she had made on his forehead, as he lay with his head in her lap the third day, waiting for the dragon. They are married, but their happiness is of no great length; for the lady longs for dulse, and as he goes to seek it the mermaid catches and swallows him. But mermaids are susceptible to music; so by playing on the harp the hero's wife succeeds in inducing the creature to bring up her husband, who in the form of a falcon flies to shore. The mermaid then takes the wife instead. A soothsayer informs him that the mermaid's soul is an egg, inside a goose, inside a ram, inside a hurtful bull that dwells in a certain glen. With the help of the Grateful Animals he succeeds in recovering his wife and slaying the mermaid.[1]

Here, after the beginning, the hero's brothers drop out of the story. The more complex Lithuanian tale of *Strong Hans and Strong Peter* retains both twins. An angel brings to a childless queen a golden fish; and a witch brings her a silver fish. She eats both and bears twins, the elder with golden hair and a golden star on his forehead, the younger with the like in silver. In their nurses' absence they are suckled, the one by a lioness and the other by a she-bear. Two snakes, deputed by the witch to kill Hans, the golden twin, are taken by him one in each hand, though he is only a few weeks old, and strangled. The witch, later on, sends a monster to kill him; but an angel meets him, and bids

[1] i. Campbell, 93. Compare the variant told by a woman of the island of Berneray, *ibid.* 98.

him bathe in a certain brook and then anoint his body with an ointment, which he gives him. This renders Hans invulnerable, and enables him to overcome the monster. The brothers then set out together, and part at a crossway. Hans encounters a twelve-headed dragon, and slays him in the same manner as Herakles did the Hydra, dipping subsequently his arrows in the poisonous blood. He thus rescues the princess; but before allowing him to marry her, her father imposes other Herculean tasks upon him —among them, the slaughter of the Nemean lion, the capture of the stag of Mount Mænalus (here a horse, captured by wounding his foot), and the theft of the apples from the Garden of the Hesperides. The way to the apple-tree (here called the Tree of Health and Life), we are told, lay through Hell; and incidentally Hans overthrew both Cerberus and the Devil. To his astonishment, he found his brother Peter bound to a rock in the place of torture, together with his wife. He freed them both, and sent them back to earth. On bringing the apples to the king, Hans was at last permitted to wed his daughter. The story then turns to Peter, to explain how he and his wife had had the misfortune to get into Hell. It appears that Peter's first adventure after quitting his brother was that of Theseus overcoming the Minotaur. It naturally ended in his marrying the king's daughter and becoming ruler. Various neighbouring peoples, however, made war on him—among them, the Amazons, described as a tribe of women whose hands were swords. Against this foe he invoked the Devil, and gave his wife in return for help. But ere long, repenting of the bargain, he descended into Hell to fetch her back. He had reckoned without his host: the Devil was too strong for him; and it was only

by his brother's intervention that he and his wife were delivered.[1]

In a Sicilian tale, a dethroned king catches a golden fish, which desires to be cut into eight pieces, two to be given to his wife, two to his horse, two to his dog, and two to be buried in the garden. The two latter pieces shoot up into magical swords. The twins set out together and afterwards part. One of them wins in a tournament the daughter of the king who had dethroned his father. This recalls Basile's Neapolitan tale; but, unlike that, there is no stress laid on the episode of the Medusa-witch. On the contrary, it is presented as a mere ordinary hunt at which the hero is detained for three days, while his brother comes to the city and is mistaken for him.[2] In the stories previously given of this type the same episode is hardly, if at all, to be recognised.

Another type, wanting the Dragon-slaughter, contains the Life-token. The best-known story of this type is Grimm's tale of *The Gold Children*. There the life-token is a golden lily which grows up with each of the twins. Disguised in bear-skins, the hero wins the love of a beautiful village-maiden. After his marriage he goes to hunt and chases a stag. The stag disappears; and he finds himself standing before a hut inhabited by a witch, who petrifies him for threatening her obstreperous dog. His brother compels the witch to restore him to life.[3]

As told in Flanders, the talking fish directs the fisher to cut it into three pieces, one for himself, one for his wife,

[1] i. *Zeits. f. Volksk.*, 230. This tale has a suspicious air. Whether the reminiscences it contains of classic stories are of purely oral transmission I cannot determine.

[2] i. Gonzenbach, 269 (Story No. 39).

[3] Grimm, i. *Tales*, 331 (Story No. 85).

and the third to be buried in the garden. Three boys of marvellous beauty are the result; and digging, in accordance with the fish's instructions, where he had buried the third piece, the fisherman finds three swords, three pistols, and three flageolets of stone. The eldest son, going to seek his fortune, reaches a magnificent palace, where one of the king's daughters, looking out of window, falls over head and ears in love with him. Against her advice he goes to visit a palace of crystal, inside whose glittering walls whosoever put his foot was changed into a pillar of salt. Seeking in vain for the entrance, he meets an old witch, who opens the door by her magical wand, and invites him to enter. Before doing so, he puts his flageolet to his lips to warn his brothers; for the instrument's property was that wherever in the world its owner played on it his brothers would hear, and would know where to find him. Then he enters, and, like thousands before him, is changed into a black stone. The second brother, on hearing the pipe, set out to seek his brother; and he too was changed into a pillar of salt. The youngest draws his sword and pistol upon the witch, and compels her to disenchant her victims. Then, on opening the door, hundreds and hundreds of men and women pour forth, with one voice thanking heaven and their courageous deliverer. The three brothers marry the king's daughters with banging of bells and clanging of cannon.[1]

This type is found not only in Germany and Flanders, but also among the southern branches of the Slavonic race, as well as in Greece, in northern Italy, and in Brittany. Two more examples, however, must suffice. The Mantuan

[1] ii. *Rev. Trad. Pop.*, 359, from a Flemish collection, then unpublished, by M. Pol de Mont. This story was obtained at Ypres.

version follows that of Grimm in its opening, where the Father of the Fishes, as he is here called, repeatedly enriches the fisherman before the latter's wife insists on knowing the secret of his wealth, and seeing the fish. The boys, as in the Flemish tale, are three in number; and the life-token is the fish's blood preserved in three vases. The first of the brothers, going to liberate a king's daughter who is enslaved by an ogre in an enchanted palace, is touched by a witch with a magical berry and turned to stone. The second brother meets the same fate. They are both delivered, together with the princess, by the youngest, who restores them to life by anointing them with the fish's blood. The maiden is the reward of the youngest brother's heroism.[1] In the Breton story the fisher's wife is already pregnant, and has a fancy for eating fish. The large fish caught by her husband gives directions for the wife to eat its flesh, the mare to drink the water wherein it has been washed, and the dog to eat its entrails and lungs. The life-token is a laurel, into whose trunk a knife is to be stuck daily by the twin-brother (there are but two) left at home: if blood follow, the absent one is dead. Being hired as groom, the first brother is married by his master's daughter. He notices that the windows on one side of the castle are always closed; and on asking why, his wife tells him that there is a yard on that side full of venomous reptiles. He goes that way, and is entertained by the Medusa-witch, who pushes him upon an enormous wheel covered with razors, where he is hacked to pieces. He is revenged by his brother upon the witch, at whose death a princess transformed into a vixen resumes her human shape, and aids her deliverer in putting the bits of his

[1] Visentini, 104 (Story No. 19).

brother's body together and reviving him with the Water of Life.[1]

A Bosnian *märchen* presents us with a type wherein only the Supernatural Birth and the Medusa-witch are preserved. A pilgrim gives an apple to a childless man. His wife is to eat it, the peel is to be divided between the mare and the bitch, and the seeds are to be planted in the garden. The elder twin, with his horse and dog, and his lance of apple-wood, swims across the sea, and in doing so becomes gilt. He marries a king's daughter, and pursues a stag with golden horns, which leads him to a tower. There he gambles with a lady for the stag; but, losing, he is thrown into her dungeon, whence he is rescued by his brother, who wins him back and weds the lady. The elder's jealousy, however, is aroused on the way home; and he draws his sword against the younger, but is prevented from doing him any harm, and at his return recognises how groundless his passion has been.[2] In a Portuguese variant it does not end quite so innocently; for when the elder learned that his wife had mistaken the younger for her husband, he put him to death from which there was no revival.[3] The Bosnian version differs also in its opening from the other variants, all of which refer the supernatural birth to a fish, or eel. This type is found in Sicily and in Germany, as well as in the Balkan and Iberian peninsulas. It may be called, from the Portuguese variant just cited, *The Tower of Babylon type*.

A type more interesting, because more various in its evolution, is that which comprises only the Life-token and

[1] Luzel, *Contes Bretons*, 63.
[2] Leskien, 543, citing Bosanski Prijatelj.
[3] Braga, i. *Contos*, 117 (Story No. 48).

the Medusa-witch. It is usually associated with Galland's tale of *The Two Sisters who envied their Cadette*, where it appears as an episode. In the Wortley Montagu Codex, at Oxford, it is found as a separate tale, and has been thence translated by Sir Richard Burton. The eldest of three brothers, it tells us, determines to procure a certain little nightingale which transmews to stone all who come to it. Before starting, he takes his seal-ring from his finger and gives it to his next brother as his life-token: it will squeeze his finger if a mishap occur. The bird's habit was to cry out to its would-be captor, and, if he replied, to take a pinch of dust and, scattering it upon him, turn him to stone. The third brother only is successful in holding his tongue and catching the bird. By sprinkling another material upon his unfortunate predecessors, they are disenchanted, and among them his elder brothers. The latter fling him into a well, that they may take the credit of the exploit; but he escapes by means of a ring he has obtained from the bird, and vindicates his claim.[1]

Another variant is found in the Tirol as a pendant to a story of an innocent persecuted wife. The elder brother exhibits a dancing bear to the king of Babylon, who is so delighted with it that he bestows his daughter on the exhibitor, and names him viceroy. The viceroy goes to hunt with his bear in the forest. He is overtaken by a tempest, and kindles a fire to warm himself. The Medusa-witch conquers him by the usual wiles. His brother is his deliverer, and happily there is no jealousy. The life-token is a knife stuck in a tree and becoming rusty when a misfortune befalls either of the brothers.[2]

[1] Burton, iv. *Suppl. Nights*, 244.

[2] Zingerle, *Kinder- und Hausm. aus Süddeutsch.*, 124.

A tale from Normandy leads us back to the fisherman. He catches the King of the Fishes, who recommends that, after frying, its bones be buried in the garden. A treasure would be found at the spot indicated; from its head three faithful dogs would spring for his three sons, and three rose-trees would grow from the earth—his son's life-tokens. The eldest son, having married a rich wife, sees the castle of the Medusa-witch, and falls a victim to her. When the youngest, by his dog's help, destroys her, the second and third brothers wed two of the loveliest ladies, who are disenchanted by her death.[1] A Milanese variant omits all the marriages, and gives as the life-token a handkerchief, which is besmirched with blood when its owner is bewitched.[2]

The Scottish *märchen* of *The Red Etin* represents the three youths as the sons of two widows. The two sons of one of the widows depart successively with their mother's malison. The life-token is a knife which will become rusty, as in the Tirolese variant. The Medusa-witch is the Red Etin of Ireland. He puts three questions, and petrifies him who is unable to answer them. Moreover, he holds in captivity King Malcolm's daughter. The third youth gets his mother's blessing and half a cake by way of provisions for his journey; the others had got whole cakes, though small ones, thanks to their carelessness in drawing water to make them. He meets an old woman, to whom he gives a piece of his bannock, and receives in return the solution of the three questions, as well as a magical wand enabling him to quell the dreadful beasts he encounters. When the questions are answered the monster's power is

[1] Carnoy, 135 (Story No. 19).
[2] Imbriani, 387.

gone. The youth hews off his three heads, delivers King Malcolm's daughter, and disenchants his two friends.[1] The relation between this tale and that of Œdipus need not be pointed out.

The Tirolese tale of *The Knife-grinder's Sons* will afford us the next type. Two brothers catch a bird on whose head is inscribed the words: "Whosoever roasts and eats my head will find every day a bagful of gold." Their father, reading this, intends to eat the head; but the two boys steal the bird when it is cooked; and the elder eats the body, and the younger the head. They wander out together, and part at a giant oak-tree. The life-token is a knife stuck in the tree. Hans, the elder, by sparing the lives of a fox, a wolf and a bear, gets them as followers. With their help he slays the seven-headed dragon and rescues the king's daughter. She meets him in the chapel whence the dragon was to fetch her, and gives him a ring, a chain, and a silk neckerchief. Too weary with the contest to accompany her back to her father, he lies down to rest, and is found and put to death by her father's servant, who cuts off the dragon's heads and compels the maiden to identify him as the dragon-slayer. The faithful animals, however, find the Herb of Life, and revive their master. The false servant is torn to pieces by the animals, and Hans is recognised by the princess as her true deliverer. We may note that he had cut out and preserved the dragon's tongues, but they are not referred to in the recognition scene. On retiring with his bride, he sees a magical roebuck, and at once pursues it, thus falling into the hands of the Medusa-witch. He is delivered by the younger brother; but the two brothers, quarrelling

[1] Chambers, *Pop. Rhymes*, 89.

for the bride, are drowned in crossing a river on the way back.[1]

In this type only the Supernatural Birth is wanting. The story is found in almost identical terms elsewhere in the Tirol and other German lands. In a version preserved by Pröhle, one of the two brothers is lucky, the other unlucky. The unlucky one goes to an inn, whose hostess is a witch and strangles him and his dog. The lucky one delivers the princess from the seven-headed dragon, and then goes in search of his brother. He comes to the inn, and is attacked at night by twelve witches, of whom he slays eleven, but spares the twelfth. She turns out to be the hostess. He forces her to bring his brother to life again by means of some magical ointment, a portion whereof she also gives him in case of any other misfortune to the luckless brother. Both brothers then go to the town. The king's servant has possessed himself of the dragon's tongues, and is about to be married to the princess as her saviour. This catastrophe is happily prevented by the assistance of the dog and the production of the princess' kerchief given to the dragon-slayer after the fight. One day, while hunting, the lucky brother is seized with jealousy of the unlucky one, whom he has left at the palace with his wife. He suddenly goes home and finds his brother gazing at her. Deeming this confirmation strong as Holy Writ, he draws his sword and hews the unlucky brother to pieces, thus finding occasion for the use of the ointment thoughtfully provided by the witch; for he soon discovers how groundless his suspicions have been.[2] This variant dis-

[1] Zingerle, *Kinder- und Hausm. aus. Süddeutsch.*, 260. Cf. *Ibid.*, *Kinder- und Hausm.*, 217 (Story No. 35); Grimm, i. *Tales*, 244, 419.

[2] Pröhle, *Kinder- und Volksm.*, 20 (Story No. 5).

tinguishes between the victim of the Medusa-witch and the dragon-slayer, disconnects the hero's jealousy from the Medusa-witch incident, and, like the Scandinavian tale cited in a previous chapter, gives the impostor the dragon's tongues. Moreover, it contains a mere relic of the Life-token; for the brothers on parting agree to obtain tidings of one another through their two dogs. These dogs, with the heroes' horses and spears, have grown up from seed sown by their father in a small plot of ground. It is probable that both this variant and that cited in the preceding paragraph have been derived by degradation from some version, or versions, of *The King of the Fishes*, or the *Danae, type.*

The Slavs of various parts of Russia are familiar with the type now under consideration. In a Lettish tale the brothers steal and eat the bird after having sold it. They then flee together. Coming to a crossway, they find an old man who gives them each a horse, dog, whip and bottle. The bottle is the life-token: its contents turn red if the owner's brother die. The dragon is a serpent with thrice nine heads. The hero is enticed to the Medusa-witch's hut by a roebuck.[1] A soldier's two sons, in a story given by Afanasief, receive from an old man wonderful horses and swords. The life-token is not detailed in the abstract of the story before me. One brother weds a king's daughter. The other delivers another king's daughter from a dragon, and marries her. He follows a stag, whose tracks he loses, and, after shooting a pair of ducks, comes to a deserted castle. There he meets the Medusa-witch, in the shape of a fair maiden, who changes into a lioness and swallows him. His brother compels her to cast him up and bring

[1] Auning, 87 (Story No. 133).

him to life again with Living-and-Healing-Water. She then changes back into a maiden and begs forgiveness. They weakly pardon her. Afterwards each of them is met by a beggar, who, being transformed into a lion, tears him to pieces. These lions are the Medusa-witch's brothers.[1] A Lithuanian tale speaks of three brothers and a sister. The brothers, sparing a wolf, boar, fox, lion, hare and bear, receive a whelp apiece. Parting from one another, each of them chooses a birch-tree and strikes it with his axe: the mark will run with milk or blood, according as he is alive or dead. The eldest brother takes charge of the sister, by whom he is betrayed to a robber. He subdues the robber with the assistance of his beasts, nails his sister by hands and feet to the wall of the robber's castle, and leaves her. After slaying a nine-headed dragon and rescuing the princess, the latter takes him into her carriage; but on the way to her house he is put to death by the coachman and lackey. His lion catches a crow and compels it to bring the Water of Life to restore him. He is recognised by means of the ring and handkerchief the princess has given him, and marries her. Going hunting, he falls at night into the power of the Medusa-witch, whom he finds in the shape of an old woman at a fire. The youngest brother first attempts his rescue, and afterwards the second, who is successful.[2]

The incident of the sister's treachery, which forms part of the Lithuanian tale, is found in several Slav versions.

[1] Leskien, 542.

[2] Leskien, 389. Stories of the Faithless Sister (sometimes it is the hero's mother who plays the traitor's part) are numerous in the East of Europe. I have studied some of them in a paper on *The Forbidden Chamber*, iii. *Folklore Journ.*, 214.

In a Swedish tale from north-western Finland the sister plays a different part. She has been carried off by a dragon. The brothers are twins. Their father, a fisherman, had caught a pike, which had bequeathed its eyes as the life-tokens, to turn black when the heroes were in mortal peril. The elder brother goes into the world, visiting on the way his sister, from whom he receives a sword. He saves the king's only daughter from a sea-troll, and marries her. The Medusa-witch dwells on a floating island, which the youth must needs explore. Since his rescue by the younger brother, and the slaughter of the witch, the island is no longer visible.[1] The fish reappears in a Sicilian tale, though in a different capacity. There it is caught by the brothers, who are fishermen. It is a voparedda, a poor kind of fish; and its life is spared in consequence of its piteous appeals. In return, it furnishes the brothers with horses, clothing, armour, swords and money; and they ride forth to seek adventures. The life-token is a cut in a fig-tree, which flows with milk or blood. The elder youth is the dragon-slayer. A slave is the impostor who claims the reward of the victory. The worm's seven tongues in the lady's handkerchief prove his treachery and the hero's right. One evening after his marriage the hero goes out to see a bright light upon a certain mountain, and falls a victim to the Medusa-witch. On his way to rescue him the younger is met by Saint Joseph, who advises him how to accomplish his task. The incident of the rescued man's jealous fury follows.[2]

The Kabyles are tribes of Libyan stock, inhabiting the mountains of Algeria. They have a tale of two brothers, sons of a man by different wives. One of the wives is

[1] Cavallius, 356.

[2] i. Gonzenbach, 272 (Story No. 40).

dead; and the other so persecutes the dead woman's son that he determines to go away. Before doing so, he plants a fig-tree as his life-token. He slays a seven-headed serpent which dwelt in a fountain and withheld the water. The king's daughter in this case is not a sacrifice to the snake: she is simply charged with the duty of bringing it food. She gives the food to the hero after the slaughter; and, taking one of his sandals, she returns and reports the event to her father. He calls a public assembly, in order to try the sandal on the men. The hero dresses in rags, and lames his horse, his falcon and his hound. Consequently, he is at first passed by in contempt; but he cannot escape the trial. The ascetic instincts of the heroes of these tales are remarkable: they will do anything to escape recognition and marriage. In the present case, when the sandal is fitted to his foot, the king generously says to the dragon-slayer: "I will give you my daughter gratis: become king, and I will be your minister." This is an offer the masculine Cinderella cannot refuse. The Medusa-witch is an ogress, whose domain he invades with his horse, hound and falcon. She binds the animals with hairs, and then eats them and their master. The younger brother and his animals avenge him. He watches two tarantulas fighting; the one kills the other, and brings it to life again by pressing the juice of a herb under its nose. The younger brother takes the hint, and thus revives the hero and his beasts.[1]

Two Italian variants omit the Life-token. As Basile tells the tale, there are two brothers, sons of a Neapolitan fisherman. The elder, playing with the king's son, wounds him and has to flee the country. He passes the night at a

[1] Notwithstanding they had been eaten! Rivière, 193.

deserted house, and by his courage frees it from three ghosts and acquires a treasure, which, however, he leaves to the lord of a neighbouring tower, and goes on his way with horse and hound. His next feat is to deliver a fairy from a band of robbers, from whom her honour was in danger. The Dragon-slaughter follows. He takes the seven tongues and goes to an inn, allowing the king's daughter to return alone to her father. His want of gallantry results, as usual, in the pretensions of an impostor, who possesses himself of the dragon's heads, and is about to be married to the princess, when the hero puts in his claim. The morning after the wedding he goes to the house of a lovely maiden, seen from his window. She is, of course, the Medusa-witch. He is rescued by his brother, and afterwards kills the latter in an access of jealousy. On finding out his mistake, he restores him by means of a herb which he has seen the dragon use, during the fight, to mend his own heads when struck off.[1] The other variant is a folktale recently collected in Tuscany. It is much less elaborate, and reads like a half-forgotten narrative. Here are three brothers born at a single birth. Each of them owns a horse and dog which came into the world at the same time. The first, seeking adventures, meets an old woman in the mountains, and asks for a steel that he may light a fire, for it is cold. She replies by transforming his horse, his dog and himself into salt. The second brother is dealt with in the same manner. The third, instead of asking for a steel, threatens the witch with death unless she revive his brothers. By way of recompense, he takes his two elder brothers' animals, and goes further. With the aid of his dogs he saves the king's

[1] i. Basile, 87 ; i. *Pentamerone*, 90.

daughter from a seven-headed lion. He takes the tongues; but a charcoal-burner takes the heads, and pretends to be the deliverer. On the hero's vindicating his right, he marries the lady, and the charcoal-burner is condemned to the fire.[1]

From the remaining types the Medusa-witch is absent, and from the first of them the Life-token also. Traces of the witch's influence, however, are found in some of the stories. Such a story is that of *The Enchanted Twins*, of which we have two versions, almost exactly alike, from different parts of Sicily. It seems properly to belong to the Albanian colonists settled in the island for the last four or five hundred years. A king, childless and dethroned, catches a fine red fish, which gives him the accustomed directions. In this case it is to be cut, according to one version into four, or according to the other into eight, pieces, which are to be equally distributed to the fisherman's wife, his bitch, his mare, and for burial in the garden. Two boys, two colts and two puppies are born, and, according to one version, two magical swords grow up in the garden. The twins set out together, but part. One of them wins, in a tournament, the daughter of the king, who has dethroned his father. After his marriage he goes hunting. While absent, his brother comes to the town, and is mistaken for him as in most of the foregoing types, but puts the customary sword between himself and his sister-in-law when he goes to bed. The dragon-slayer, returning, is about to kill his wife from jealousy, but is happily informed of the facts in time.[2]

An African variant, told, presumably at Blantyre, on

[1] De Gubernatis, 40 (Story No. 17).

[2] vii. Pitrè, 296; i. Gonzenbach, 269 (Story No. 39).

Lake Nyassa, to the Rev. Duff Macdonald of the Church of Scotland Mission, by a native of Quilimane, speaks of a fisherman who caught a large fish. The fish gave him millet and some of its own flesh, and spoke to him, directing him to cause his wife to eat the flesh alone, while he ate the millet. Compliance with these instructions was followed by the birth of two sons, who were called Rombao and Antonyo, with their two dogs, two spears and two guns. The explanation, however, of the origin of the dogs and weapons has been forgotten. The boys became hunters, not hesitating to kill whoever opposed them and to take possession of his land and other property. There was a whale which owned a certain water, and the chief of that country gave his daughter to buy water from the whale. But Rombao slew the whale, thus saving the maiden, and cut out its tongue, which he providently salted and preserved. The credit of the exploit is claimed by the captain of a band of soldiers, commissioned by the chief to ascertain why the whale had not sent the usual wind as a token that the girl had been eaten. The chief accordingly gives the captain his daughter in marriage. When, however, the marriage-feast is ready, and the people assembled, the lady is unwilling. Rombao, who has made it his business to be present, interferes at the critical moment with the inquiry why she is to wed the captain, and is told it is because he has killed the whale. "But where," he asks, "is the whale's tongue?" The head, of course, has been produced in evidence of the captain's brag; but the incident is omitted by the narrator. The tongue cannot be found until Rombao triumphantly produces it, and proves that he, not the captain, is entitled to the victor's honours. He marries the maiden, while the captain and his men,

who aided and abetted his falsehood, are put to death.[1] This variant contains manifest traces of weathering, which may point to a foreign, perhaps a Portuguese, provenience. The atmosphere and most of the details, however, are purely native. The husband and wife eating apart, the hunting and filibustering proceedings of the twins, the scarcity of water, the salting of the monster's tongue (which, I think, never occurs in an European variant), and the wedding customs, are among the indications of the complete assimilation of the story by the native mind. The only details distinctly traceable to Portuguese influence, paramount on the Quilimane coast, are the names Rombao and Antonyo, and the guns—neither of them essential to the story.

In an Abruzzian version the fisherman has but one son, born after his wife has consumed broth made of the magical fish. The bitch, having eaten the head, brings forth a puppy, and the mare, having eaten the flesh, a foal. Swords sprout up in the garden where the bones have been buried. The boy, grown to manhood, fights a seven-headed dragon and rescues the princess who was to have been its prey; and the story ends with his confutation of the fraudulent charcoal-burner in the ordinary way.[2]

Three Swabian variants substitute the Life-token for the Supernatural Birth. Two of them, almost exactly the same, display, so far as they go, some similarity to the Argyllshire tale mentioned in a previous chapter. Three brothers depart on their travels together. At the first finger-post they separate, each of them sticking his staff into the post until he return, so that either, coming back to the place, would know whether the others had gone home. Hans,

[1] ii. Macdonald, 341.

[2] iii. De Nino, 321 (Story No. 65).

the hero, takes service with a nobleman as a shepherd, and is cautioned never to go into the forest; for three giants dwell there, and they will kill him. One Sunday he goes into the forest and finds a castle. Entering it, he meets with no one until he gets to the last room of the top story, where is an enchanted princess. She gives him a pipe, by blowing into which he can make all things dance that hear him. He afterwards drives the sheep repeatedly into the forest, to feed on the excellent pasture there. At length the giants catch him on successive days; but Hans blows in his pipe and sets them dancing, and then takes the opportunity to kill them. He cuts out their tongues and eyes, which he wraps in his handkerchief. The princess whom he thus frees asks him to marry her and become king; but he excuses himself at present on the ground that his time of service is not up. After a while, the maiden's father, being tired of waiting, issues a proclamation for her deliverer. The nobleman, to whom Hans has foolishly confided his victory, sends his own son to court, with the bodies of the giants, to claim the reward. Hans, however, by means of the tongues and eyes, easily convicts him of falsehood. But before permitting Hans to marry the princess, the king requires him to win at the sport of running at the ring. The giants' servants in the castle furnish him with horse and splendid clothes, and instruct him in the game, so that he wins. But the king, under pretence of sending him to a monastery to learn, shuts him in an enchanted castle, haunted by thirteen devils. Hans with his pipe dances the devils to death, and the king can no longer withhold the promised reward of the princess' hand and the kingdom. After some years, Hans makes up his mind to go home, whither his brothers have preceded

him. So he puts on his old shepherd-clothing, and is despised by his brothers, one of whom has become a general, and the other a merchant. He endures all their indignities for some six weeks, until his consort, wearying of his absence, comes to look for him. He still pretends stupidity, and does all sorts of foolish things; but she recognises him through it all, and induces him to resume his royal garb, to the confusion of his father and brothers, who have been ill-using him.[1]

Here the Life-token has dwindled into a mere token of the brothers' having returned home, and all its magic is lost. The remaining variant presents no special points of interest, save that it too is obviously in a state of decay. There are three brothers who depart together. The life-token is a sword stuck in a fir-tree, to become spotted with rust if its owner die. The hero obtains helpful animals (a bear, a wolf and a lion) in the old familiar manner. The dragon is seven-headed; the coachman is the impostor, and is found out by the want of the tongues. What became of the hero's brothers nobody knows.[2]

[1] Meier, *Märchen*, 101 (Story No. 29). See also 306.

[2] *Ibid.*, 204 (Story, No. 58). The connection ought not to pass unnoticed between these Swabian tales and four Greek *märchen* obtained by Von Hahn on the island of Syra and elsewhere. The hero of one of the tales from Syra is Strong Jack, who overcomes three ogres, and weds the king's daughter held in captivity by one of them. Another ogre fights and kills him, and takes the lady to wife. The hero, restored by means of the Water of Life, learns that the ogre is to be slain only by getting possession of his External Soul, and destroying it. This he succeeds in doing, and thus recovers his wife. ii. Von Hahn, 14. More obvious is the connection of one of the other tales, wherein Strong Jack slays an ogre (*árakos*) to whom the king's daughter had been given to eat. *Ibid.*, 259. I shall have to refer to this in a future chapter.

Finally, there is a type, not very common, which includes only the three incidents of the Supernatural Birth, the Life-token, and the Dragon-slaying. The Portuguese legend of *Saint George* may be taken as the typical form. The saint is represented as one of the twin sons of a fisherman who caught the same fish three days successively. The first two days it had begged for life; but the third day it directed that it should be cut into six pieces, two for the fisherman's wife, two for his mare, and two to be buried behind his garden-gate. From the last-mentioned pieces two lances grow. Saint George and his brother start on their adventures together, but soon part, the saint giving his brother a branch of basil-gentle, and saying: "When it withers, come in search of me, because I shall then be in danger." George rescues the princess from the dragon; and her father desires to make him general and give him the maiden in marriage. At this critical moment his brother perceives the branch withering, and hurries off to find him. The difficulty is that George, by virtue of vows he has taken, cannot marry. His brother comes in time to accommodate his tender conscience, by taking the lady himself and leaving George the honours of canonisation.[1] In a story from Lorraine a different turn is given to the characters of the two younger brothers, but one which indicates a close relation with the Portuguese legend: they are the impostors who pretend to have slain the dragon. Here the fisherman catches the Queen of the Fishes repeatedly, until his wife insists on eating her majesty. The fish requests that some of its bones be placed under the bitch, some under the mare, and the rest under a rose-tree in the garden. Three puppies are found

[1] Coelho, 120 (Story No. 52).

under the bitch, three foals under the mare, and three boys beneath the rose-tree. The life-tokens are the roses on the tree, one of which falls when misfortune happens to either of the brothers. The first brother takes all three dogs; and, with their help, in a three days' conflict he quells the seven-headed beast and delivers the princess. She thereupon invites him to come home with her; but he prefers to return to his father's house, carrying the beast's heads. The king issues a proclamation for him. The youngest brother personates him; but the heads he brings turn out to be of wood, with which the real victor has deceived him. The king throws him into prison, and condemns him to be hanged the next day. His rose falls from the tree. The next brother goes to rescue him; and the king condemns him to the like punishment. His rose falls. The real victor then takes the seven heads and the seven tongues to the castle. For his sake his brothers are spared. He weds the princess, and they wed two of her maids of honour.[1]

The mention of the seven tongues, as it were by accident, is a reminiscence of what I hold to be the ancient and typical form of the Imposture-episode. A similar survival occurs in another tale from Lorraine, wherein the dragon and the Medusa-witch are confounded together. In this tale there are likewise three brothers, sons of a fisherman who had given three drops of blood of a certain big fish to his wife, three to his mare, and three to his bitch, and had preserved three in a glass as the life-token. The eldest brother, seeking adventures, enters the castle of a seven-headed witch, and is forthwith changed into a toad. The blood at home boils in the glass; and

[1] ii. Cosquin, 56 (Story No. 37).

the second brother sets out, only to meet with the same reverse. The third brother conquers the witch with the assistance of a charcoal-burner, and cuts out her tongues. Now, he who slew the witch, and brought her tongues in proof, would have the castle and marry the king's daughter. The charcoal-burner bethinks himself of his folly in not taking the tongues. To secure them, he kills the youth; and, exhibiting them to the king, he succeeds in obtaining the princess.[1] Charcoal-burners are the favourite villains of the Perseus *märchen*; but it is rarely they are successful. Nor, indeed, is it often that the folktale descends to a style of art worthy of Miss Braddon.

[1] i. Cosquin, 64 (variant of Story No. 5).

CHAPTER IV

THE INCIDENT OF THE SUPERNATURAL BIRTH IN MÄRCHEN.

WE have found the story of Perseus to consist of three leading trains of incident, namely, the Supernatural Birth, the Quest of the Gorgon's Head, and the Rescue of Andromeda. In a large number of modern variants, however, the hero is duplicated, or even tripled. This introduces a fresh element, that of the Life-token. And in nearly all the modern European variants the Quest of the Gorgon's Head undergoes a modification, and suffers a displacement to the end of the narrative. Other incidents are of course frequently mixed up with these, or even substituted for one or other of them. But, speaking broadly, the tale may be taken to consist essentially of the four elements I have named, which I now propose to examine separately.

The first in order is the Supernatural Birth. Stories of supernatural birth may be said to have a currency as wide as the world. Heroes of extraordinary achievement or extraordinary qualities were necessarily of extraordinary birth. The wonder or the veneration they inspired seemed to demand that their entrance upon life, and their departure from it, should correspond with the impression left by their

total career. Tales of supernatural birth are accordingly so numerous that it is hopeless to give an adequate account of them here. The utmost that can be done is to lay before the reader a few of the most interesting and important examples analogous to those we have been considering in previous chapters.

If we examine stories of the Danae type, or The King of the Fishes type, we find that when, as usually in the former case, a maiden is the hero's mother, only one child is born of her. It is sufficiently remarkable for a virgin to bring forth one child. But when, as in the greater number of variants of the latter type, a married woman is the mother, the prodigy must be placed beyond doubt by a double or threefold birth, and often by its repetition upon other animals who partake of the impregnating influence. This influence is generally conveyed in food. The peoples among whom the stories originated were either savages, or in a stage of civilisation but little advanced beyond that of savagery. They credited every marvel because they knew little of the properties of nature. Of the organisation of their own bodies they entertained the most rudimentary notions. Whether from an analogy between the normal act of impregnation and that of eating and drinking, or because they had learned that at least one mode of operating effectively on the organism, for purposes alike of injury and healing, was by drugs taken through the mouth, this was the favourite method of supernatural impregnation. In the stories we have already considered, fish or fruit has been the kind of food oftenest employed. Similar incidents are very numerous outside the Perseus group.

Among Slavonic nations, the agency of a fish, even in the special form in which it appears in the story of *The King*

of the Fishes, is not uncommon as an opening to other tales. Several are cited by Leskien and Brugman in the notes to their *Litauische Märchen*; and of them we may mention one or two. A Serbo-Croatian tale exhibits an eel cut into four pieces, of which the woman, the mare and the bitch eat one each and bear twins; the remaining piece, being buried, grows up into two golden swords. In a tale from the seaboard of Croatia a fisherman cuts a fish into three, giving a part each to his wife, the mare and the bitch, and hanging the scales in the chimney. The latter are forgotten in the sequel; but twins are born to the woman and the animals. A king in a Czech tale causes two fish with golden and silver fins to be caught. He eats one and his consort the other, with the result that she bears two boys, one with a golden, the other with a silver, star on his forehead. One of Afanasief's Russian tales relates how a beggar advised a king to assemble boys and girls of seven years old, and let the maidens spin and the boys in one night knit together a net with which a carp having golden fins is to be caught for the queen to eat. The dog, however, gets the intestines, and the three mares the water wherein the fish has been washed; while the cookmaid gnaws the bones. Queen, cook and dog bear each a son named Ivan, of whom the dog's son is the strongest; and he makes a successful raid underground on the realm of the monsters. The mares bear a foal each. A childless king, in another of Afanasief's tales, builds a bridge over a pathless swamp; and when it is finished he sends a servant to hide and listen to the remarks of the wayfarers. Two beggars approach. The one praises the king; the other says: "One ought to wish him posterity." And he goes on to prescribe a silken draw-net knit by night

before cock-crow. This, if let down into the sea, would catch a golden fish; and the queen, eating thereof, would bear a son. A Polish tale represents a Gipsy woman as counselling a noble, but barren, lady to catch a fish full of roe in the sea, and to eat the roe at sunset at full-moontide. Her chambermaid, however, tastes it also, and, like her mistress, bears a son.[1] In Bohemia the tale is related of a childless monarch, who issues a proclamation offering a reward to any one who will find means whereby he may obtain an heir. An old woman presents herself and offers her help, on condition of being maintained until her death in honour in the royal palace. Her terms being accepted, she hastens to the brook which flows through the royal gardens and draws forth a gold-fish and a silver-fish. When these are cooked the queen eats the gold-fish and the beldam the silver-fish. The former bears a son on whose forehead beams a golden star, and the latter a son similarly adorned with a star of silver.[2]

The population of Eastern Pomerania is probably in the main Slavonic. There the people tell of a queen to whom a beggar-woman brought two fishes to be eaten by herself; nobody else was to taste them. The cat, however, stole one; and she and the queen bore a son apiece.[3] Outside the Slavonic populations, the incident in this form does not seem a favourite in Europe. But we find in Iceland a story of an earl's wife, to whom three women in blue mantles appear in a dream, and command her to go to a stream at hand, and, laying herself down, to drink of it and try to get into her mouth a certain trout she will see

[1] Leskien, 546; De Gubernatis, ii. *Zool. Myth.*, 29. Köhler in his notes to Gonzenbach (ii. 229) refers to several other stories.

[2] Milenowsky, 1.

[3] Knoop, 204.

there, when she will at once conceive. These women are doubtless Norns, for they appear again at the birth and pronounce the fate of the daughter who is born to the lady in consequence.[1]

Among the Eskimo it is also a woman who provides the fish. She meets the husband, and from her bag produces two small dried fishes, a male and a female. His wife is to eat the former if a son be desired, the latter if a daughter. As he does not want a daughter, he himself eats the female fish, with the wholly unexpected result that he himself gives birth to the daughter.[2]

Two curious tales are recorded from Annam. One of them, thought by M. Landes, who collected it, to be of Chinese provenience, speaks of a childless man who determined to eat an enormous eel known to inhabit a certain river-confluence. To him a bonze comes and begs him to spare it. When he cannot prevail, the holy man asks for food ere he retires. He is given the usual vegetables, cooked according to Buddhist ritual for this purpose without salt or seasoning, and then goes away. The other man catches the eel by poisoning the water; and when it is cooked the food offered to the bonze is found in its stomach: hence it is known that the bonze was no other than a manifestation of the eel. After the man has eaten the eel, his wife becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son, who ultimately proves the ruin of his parents. In short, he is no other than the eel, who thus avenges itself on its murderer.[3] Here we find expressly asserted the identity of the progeny with the mysterious fish, a subject whereto

[1] ii. Powell and Magnusson, 435. The story is given with some trifling differences, Maurer, 284.

[2] Rink, 443.

[3] Landes, *Annamites*, 160.

I shall have to return in a future chapter. The other Annamite story is a variant of the well-known group of *The Lucky Fool*. A lazy man was once lying on a raft when a fish leaped upon it. The man caught the fish, scraped off its scales; and, being too slothful to rise and wash it in the water, he rinsed it in his own urine, and threw it on the raft to dry. It is, however, carried off by a raven into the king's daughter's garden. Her maids bring it to her; and when it is cooked she eats it, and immediately becomes pregnant. In due time she gives birth to a son; and the king summons all the men of his kingdom that he may choose a husband for her. The lazy man floats his raft to the front of the palace. The princess' son sees him from the palace-roof, and hails him as his father. Believing in this wise child, the king sends for the lazy man to his presence, and gives him the princess in marriage.[1] Such was the reward of laziness.

In India the ordinary mode of supernatural conception is by the eating of fruit. A few examples will suffice. I have in a previous chapter related Somadeva's tale of Indívarasena and his brother, who were born in consequence of their mother's eating two heavenly fruits. The *Kathá-sarit-Ságara*, or *Ocean of the Streams of Story*, contains other narratives to the same effect. Concerning the birth of the famous hero Vikramáditya, it tells us that Siva appeared to his mother in a dream and gave her a fruit.[2] Another childless queen, after propitiating Siva, receives a fruit in a dream from "a certain man with matted locks," no doubt a fakir.[3] In modern folklore Siva appears in the garb of a *jogí*, or fakir, to a childless king

[1] Landes, *op. cit.*, 150. Cf. *ibid.*, 174.
[2] i. *Kathá*, 565.
[3] *Ibid.*, 172, 189.

and hands him four fruits, which the queen is to eat the following Sunday before sunrise, and she will then bear four sons, who will be exceedingly clever and good.[1] Elsewhere we are told of a rajah, who has seven wives, but no offspring. He is given by a fakir a stick, with instructions to knock down seven mangoes from a certain tree and, catching them as they fall, to take them home to his seven wives. Six of the wives eat the seven mangoes; and the seventh wife is reduced to eating one of the mango-stones thrown away by the other wives. All seven give birth to sons; but the son of the seventh is born in monkey-form. He is, of course, the hero, his brothers playing the same part towards him as those of Joseph, or those of Khodadad in the *Arabian Nights*.[2] A barren woman in another tale goes to Mahadeo, or Siva. He meets with her in his customary disguise as a fakir, and gives her a mango, whereof she and two other women, who desire the same boon but have been deterred from reaching the god by the dangers of the way, are to eat. She is blessed with a son, and the other women with a daughter each.[3] Mangoes, indeed, seem the usual prescription in Indian folktales.

Other fruits are not wanting. A fakir gives to a monarch who is without issue one hundred and sixty *lichí* fruits, which resemble plums—one for each of his wives.[4] Barleycorns are given by another holy man for the same pious purpose.[5] The *Adventures of Kâmrûp*, a literary romance

[1] Knowles, 415.

[2] Stokes, 41. Cf. Steel, 290, and i. Cosquin, 149.

[3] Frere, 250. Mangoes appear also in Sâstrî, *Drav. Nights*, 54; Sâstrî, *Folklore in South. Ind.*, 140; Knowles, 130; Day, 117. In a variant of the last, the fakir simply tells the king that his prayers are heard, and his seven queens shall each bear a son. Steele, 98.

[4] Stokes, 91.

[5] Steele, 47.

in Hindustani, tells of a king who had no children. He is presented by a fakir with a fruit of *srî*, or prosperity. It is eaten by his queen ; and she and six other ladies who taste it add to the population on the same day.[1] The youngest of seven brothers, in a Santali story, plants a certain vegetable which bears a fruit. He measures its growth daily, until it becomes a span long and then remains stationary. He warns his sisters-in-law : " Do not eat my fruit, for whoever does so will give birth to a child only one span long." The temptation is too great for one of them. She plucks the fruit and eats it ; and though she, in common with the other sisters-in-law, positively denies the theft, she is found out in due time by the advent of a baby one span long—a Santali Tom Thumb.[2]

According to a tale of the Altaic tribes of South Siberia, a girl when married is found to be already pregnant. On being questioned, her account of the matter was that she had picked up a lump of ice which had fallen with a heavy rain, and on breaking it in pieces she had found inside, and eaten, two grains of wheat. When her time came she bore twin boys.[3] A curious legend obtained by Professor Haddon from an islander of Torres Straits declares that a woman, who had been deprived of her husband by a supernatural female and set adrift on the sea, was cast away on an island where she had no other food than some seeds which ornamented her ear-pendants. After consuming them she discovered that she was in the way to become a mother, and laid an egg, like a sea-eagle's, out of which she hatched a bird. The bird supported her, and at length brought her back to her husband.[4]

[1] i. Cosquin, 69, citing Benfey.
[2] Campbell, *Santal F. T.*, 25.
[3] i. Radloff, 204.
[4] i. *Folklore*, 49.

Mohammedan stories attach, as we might expect, inordinate value to the male sex. They represent the fruit as eaten by the father, rather than by the mother. The *Qissa Agar o Gul* is an Urdu adaptation of a Persian romance. It was published as lately as 1880 at Lucknow. Here the fruit, a couple of apples, is given by a dervish to a king and his vizier, neither of whom has issue. Each of them eats his apple, and begets—the king, a son, and the vizier, twins, boy and girl.[1] I have already referred incidentally to the case of Khodadad, who was one of fifty brethren begotten by a childless monarch upon his fifty wives, after eating as many pomegranate seeds. He had incessantly prayed for offspring, and was commanded in a dream by a man "of semblance like unto a prophet" to rise at dawn, and, saying certain prayers, to go to his Chief Gardener, from whom he was to require a pomegranate and to take of it as many seeds as seemed best to him.[2] Another sultan is represented in the same great collection as receiving from a *Takrúri*, one of a Moslem negroid people credited by the Arabs with magical powers, a portion of certain medicinal roots, to be eaten by himself.[3] So in the Turkish *History of Forty Vezirs*, where a childless king beseeches the intercession of a convent of dervishes, and sends them a fat ram and an offering of rice, honey and oil, the sheykh of the convent returns him a bowlful "of that meat," ordering him to "desire a son and eat of the dervishes' portion."[4] Yet the rule is not without exception. A sovereign of Serendib, in the *Bahar Danush*, receives from a religious recluse an apple with instructions to give

[1] Capt. R. C. Temple, in iv. *F.L. Journal*, 282.
[2] Burton, iii. *Suppl. Nights*, 270.
[3] *Ibid.* iv. 298.
[4] Gibb, 163.

it to his consort.[1] A tale told by the Kabyles of the Lower Atlas speaks of a man who bought seven apples for his seven wives. Growing hungry, he ate half of one, or, according to a variant, he gave it to a man who met him. The result was that the wife who had only the other half brought forth a dwarf.[2] And in a Balochi tale a fakir gives a king two kunar-fruits (*Zizyphus Jujuba*), one to be eaten by himself and the other by his wife.[3] These exceptions, however, are more apparent than real. The *Bahar Danush* is an Indian work, composed in the reign of Shah Jehan by Ināyatu 'llāh of Delhi, who professed to have received the stories of which it is composed from a Brahman. This is merely another way of saying that they are drawn from earlier Indian sources. The Kabyles are mountain tribes related to the Berbers. The religion of the Apostle of Allah sits lightly upon them. Their aboriginal precepts are at least as much regarded as those of the Koran; and so far are their social relations from being dominated by Arab customs, that their women enjoy free and unrestricted intercourse with both sexes, and are looked upon as almost if not quite the equals of men. The Balochis pay little more respect than the Kabyles to Islam; and their religious practices are largely tinged with their ancestral paganism and that of their neighbours.

When a European folktale, on the other hand, exhibits the husband as devouring the magical fruit meant for his wife, it does not fail to make him repent it. For example, in a Portuguese tale from Algarve, a woman who confesses to Saint Antony, and confides to him her despair of children, receives from the saint three apples to be eaten fasting. Arrived at home, she puts the apples down and

[1] iii. *Bahar Danush*, 80. [2] Rivière, 231, 225. [3] iv. *Folklore*, 285.

prepares breakfast. Her husband, meanwhile, coming in, finds and eats them. When he learned what he had done he was terrified, and sent his wife back to the holy man, only to have his terrors confirmed. As the time arrived he began to scream; nor had he any alleviation of his agony until a person who understood came and cut him open, and brought forth a daughter.[1] But in cases where both parents partake of the fruit, the natural way of birth is the result. An old woman in an Abruzzian tale gives a fisherman's wife an orange, to be eaten, half by herself and the other half by her husband. The rind is to be thrown at the foot of an orange-tree in the garden. A boy is born, and a sword grows at the foot of the orange-tree.[2] A Greek tradition belonging to the Bluebeard cycle relates that an ogre divided an apple between a king and his wife, on condition that the eldest son was to be given to him. The queen thereafter bears three boys. This is from the island of Syra. A story from Ziza in Epirus speaks of two spouses who had lived with one another for forty years without issue, and who obtained a boy under similar conditions; and a mare to which they give the apple-parings bore a foal.[3] On the whole we are probably warranted in

[1] Braga, i. *Contos*, 42. Two instances in Europe where the magical food is to be eaten by the husband occur in Gipsy tales. In one from southern Hungary, a woman who wished for a daughter gave her husband at full moon the egg of a black hen to eat, with the best result. Von Wlislocki, *Volksdicht.* 314. This is in accordance with a practice referred to in Chapter VI., *infra*. In the other tale, which is from Transylvania, the wife goes out at midnight and collects herbs and bones. She cooks them at home, gives her husband to eat, and thereupon, becoming pregnant, she bears a son in the form of a kid. Von Wlislocki, *Märchen*, 119.

[2] i. Finamore, pt. i., 88.

[3] ii. Von Hahn, 33, 197.

conjecturing that Mohammedanism has influenced all the stories where the husband consumes the fruit without evil results; and that they are a departure from the earlier form, in which the wife eats it alone. A variant of the last-mentioned *märchen*, also from Epirus, follows the usual rule. There a queen was presented with an apple by a Jew. She ate it and threw the peel away, and the mare devoured it. By and by the queen and the mare were both found pregnant.[1] Beyond the Ægean Sea the Hellenic population has preserved the same version of the incident in a tale from Smyrna of a queen on whom a dervish confers three apples, with directions to eat them and she will have three boys.[2] So, in a French tale from Louisiana, a lady is given an apple by an old woman. She eats the apple and throws the peel in the yard, where it is eaten by a mare. The next morning, so rapid is the effect of magical power, both she and the mare have brought forth young.[3]

The Russians have the story in a shape recalling some of the variants of the Danae type. A Tsaritsa, to quench her thirst, draws water from a white marble well in a golden cup. She drinks eagerly, and with the water swallows a pea, thus becoming pregnant of a son who is destined to achieve the destruction of the Savage Serpent.[4] In White Russia we hear of a woman who, having drawn water, is returning with her bucket when she sees a pea rolling along. Saying to herself, "This is the gift of God," she picks it up, eats it, and in course of time becomes the

[1] i. Von Hahn, 90; Garnett, i. *Women*, 178.
[2] Legrand, 191, xvi.
[3] Prof. Fortier, in ii. *Journ. Am. F.L.*, 39.
[4] Curtin, *Russians*, 130.

mother of a tiny boy, "who grew not by years, but by hours, like millet-dough when leavened," and became a hero of enormous strength and wisdom, called Little Rolling-pea.[1]

The consumption of some kind of drug, or enchanted compound, is also an approved method of causing pregnancy, especially (if we may judge by the proportion of tales wherein it appears) in India. In the Bengali tale of *Life's Secret* a fakir offers a drug to a childless queen, to remove her barrenness, telling her that if she swallow it with the juice of a pomegranate flower a son will be born, whose life shall be bound up in a golden necklace, in a wooden box, in the heart of a big boal-fish, in the tank in front of the palace.[2] A Buddhist tale, originally from India, has been found, containing the incident, in Ceylon, and also in the *Kah-gyur*, a Tibetan version of an Indian collection no longer extant. It narrates how Indra, the king of the gods, taking pity on his friend, King Sakuni, sends him a medicine, of which his wives are to drink, and he will thereby obtain sons and daughters.[3] Often a bargain is made, as in some of the European tales already cited, that the queen shall bear twins, one of whom is to be given to the holy man, or supernatural being, through whose gift the curse of barrenness has been taken away. So in another Bengali tale a religious mendicant came to a king who had no issue, and said: "As you are anxious to have a son, I can give the queen a drug, by swallowing which she will give birth to twin sons; but I will give the medicine on this condition, that of those twins you will

[1] Wratislaw, 133; Ralston, *Songs*, 177.
[2] Day, 1. [3] Ralston, *Tibetan Tales*, 21.

give one to me and keep the other yourself."[1] And the same bargain is made by a *jogi* in a folktale from the Kamaon in the Himalaya, in giving a fruit, which, divided between a king's seven wives, causes them to bear a son apiece.[2] Nor is the bargain confined to India. In a tale told by the Swahili, or mongrel inhabitants, half Negro half Arab, of Zanzibar, a demon came disguised as a man to a sultan who lacked a son, and asked: "If I give you a medicine, and you get a son, what will you give me?" The sultan offers half his property; but it is rejected. He then offers half his towns. The demon replies: "I am not satisfied." The sultan inquires: "What do you want, then?" And he said: "If you get two children, give me one, and take one yourself." The sultan said: "I have consented." The demon accordingly brings him a medicine, which his wife takes and bears three sons.[3]

Sometimes the drug is given by one of the lower animals, most of which, it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, are regarded by peoples in the lower culture as of superhuman power or knowledge. In a Kaffir story, a bird gives a childless wife some pellets to be taken before food, and she consequently bears a beautiful daughter.[4] A curious tale was related to the Rev. Charles Swynnerton in the Panjab of a snake who was about to eat a young man, when his wife wept and asked the creature what would become of her when her husband was eaten;—why was he

[1] Day, 187. Cf. a Baluchi tale in Jacobs, *Indian F. T.*, 179.

[2] Prato in xii. *Archivio*, 40, citing Minayeff, *Indiiska skazki y legendy*.

[3] Steere, 381. In an Arab story from Egypt a Mogrebin gives a king, upon the same bargain, two bonbons, one for himself, the other for his wife. Three sons are born, of whom the Mogrebin claims the eldest. Here the Mohammedan influence prevails. Spitta Bey, 1.

[4] Theal, 54.

going to inflict this injury upon her? The serpent in remorse crept back to his hole and fetched two magical globules, saying: "Here, foolish woman, take these two pills and swallow them, and you will have two sons to whom you can devote yourself, and who will take good care of you!" The girl, however, replied: "But what about my good name?" The snake, who knew not that she was already wed, became exasperated. "Women are such preposterous beings!" he cried, as he fetched two more pills. These he gave to the disconsolate girl, telling her: "When any of your neighbours revile you on account of your sons, take one of these pills between finger and thumb, hold it over them, rubbing it gently so that some of the powder may fall on them, and immediately you will see them consume away to ashes." Tying the former pills in her cloth, the girl looked at these new pills incredulously. Then, with a sudden thought, she gently rubbed them over the snake, saying with an innocent air: "O snake, explain this mystery to me again! Is this the way I am to rub them?" The moment the magical powder touched the snake he was set on fire; and in another instant he was merely a long wavy line of grey dust lying on the ground.[1] In one of the *Arabian Nights* the potent drug is the flesh of two serpents. It is prescribed by King Solomon to a king of Egypt and his vizier, both of whom were without issue. The serpents in question were remarkable: the one had a head like an asp's, the other a head like an ifrit's. And their flesh forms an exception to the Mohammedan rule already noted in these cases, for it was to be given to the wives of the childless men.[2]

Coming to Europe, we find a story told at Torricella

[1] Swynnerton, *Indian Nights*, 137. [2] Burton, vii. *Nights*, 320.

Pelligna, in the Abruzzi, where a fairy, under the form of an old woman, tells the king that he will have no children until the queen shall drink a decoction made with three hairs from the devil's beard. A servant is accordingly despatched for these precious materials; and when, after various adventures, he returns with them, the prescription proves so successful that the queen bears a daughter fair as the sun.[1] The medicine, however, is more frequently used in European *märchen* to gratify spite against an unfortunate maiden, by putting her unwittingly into a condition inconsistent with maidenhood. In a Tuscan tale, for example, a stepmother hates her stepdaughter, and is taught by a beggar-woman how to injure her. She accordingly prepares, from the blood of seven wild beasts, a philtre whose property it is to cause pregnancy. Her father consents to her being put to death; but the ruffians charged with the crime content themselves by simply abandoning her in the wood. She is delivered in due time of a dragon with seven heads of different animals, who becomes his mother's guardian, procures for her an honourable marriage with a king, and ultimately transforms himself into a man.[2] A South Slavonic tale from Varadzin yields a similar plot. There it is a queen whose daughter is beloved by her father to such an extent as to rouse her jealousy. She is advised by a tramp to go on Good Friday to a churchyard, dig up a bone, grate it, and give the gratings to her daughter next

[1] i. Finamore, pt. ii., 13.

[2] i. *Archivio*, 524. In a Breton tale a sorceress gives a cake to the stepmother, which causes the heroine to bring forth a cat. Luzel, iii. *Contes Pop.* 126. In a variant, the sorceress advises that a black cat be dished up for the maiden. *Ibid.*, 139. In both cases the cat-offspring being ripped up, a prince emerges.

morning in her coffee. The girl becomes pregnant, and is set adrift on a ship. She bears a son who is spotted, but who, after various adventures, is disenchanted of his foul deformity.[1]

We shall hereafter have to consider several superstitious beliefs and practices in connection with the dead. Here I simply pause to mention two other Slav stories attributing to portions of dead human bodies the reproductive faculty. The first comes to us from Bohemia, where it is said that a gravedigger's beautiful daughter was followed about by a skull that never quitted her feet. By a witch's advice her father burned it and made his daughter swallow the ashes. In consequence of so doing, she gave birth to a son who held mysterious converse with the Sleeping Heroes beneath Mount Blanik.[2] The other is a Lithuanian story from Godleva, concerning a hermit who, in obedience to God's express command, burned himself alive by way of penance. The day after his immolation a hunter passed by the place, and turned aside to see the remains of the pyre, and ascertain the cause of the strange smell. Poking among the ashes he found the hermit's heart, which he took home to his daughter to cook for his supper. She, however, ate it herself and in two hours bore a son of powers, it need hardly be said, as remarkable as his parentage.[3] It is

[1] Krauss, i. *Sagen*, 195.

[2] De Charencey, *Le Fils de la Vierge*, 20, citing Friez and Léger, *La Bohème historique, pittoresque et littéraire*, 341, 345. I have not seen this work, and do not know what value is to be attached to the story; but it has the appearance of being genuine. As to Blanik and its Sleeping Host, see *The Science of Fairy Tales*, 184, 219, where I have collected and discussed a number of legends relating to this mountain, in connection with the Seven Sleepers, King Arthur, etc.

[3] Leskien, 490.

interesting to observe that in India potency of this kind is attached to fakirs and religious mendicants. A special privilege would seem to belong in the popular mind to such religious consecration. Vows of celibacy and other ascetic usages have their compensation. In all ages and countries, indeed, the virtue of asceticism, of self-sacrifice, or of suffering however caused, has been recognised. The Egyptian *märchen* of *The Two Brothers*, which was written down more than twelve hundred years before the Christian era, exhibits this as one of its central ideas. I shall have to refer to this legend again. It is enough to remark here that, just as the self-immolation of the hermit in the Lithuanian story seems to have conferred upon his heart the strange quality we are discussing, Bata, the younger of the Two Brothers, by his unmerited sufferings acquired an inherent and miraculous capacity of metamorphosis and reproduction. When the persea-trees, in whose form he found himself during his chequered career, were being cut down, a chip flew from one of them and entered the mouth of the king's favourite, once his own wife. She swallowed it and, conceiving, gave birth to a male child, who was no other than a new manifestation of her former husband, Bata.[1]

For in these tales not only the fruit but also other parts of a tree or shrub are endowed with the power of causing conception. In Denmark we are told of a wise woman, by whose counsel a childless queen goes down before sunrise into the royal garden and eats the three buds of a certain

[1] Maspero, 26 ; ii. *Records of the Past*, 137 ; De Charencey, *Trad., rel.*, 11 ; *Le Page Renouf* in xi. *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, 184. The scribe, who wrote the MS. we have, flourished under Rameses II. and his two successors. How many times the story had been written down before, of course we do not know.

thorny bush. After six months the queen bears a daughter, who must be kept from her parents' sight until her fourteenth birthday, else both mother and child will suffer a dire misfortune.[1] An Icelandic tale gives, by a beggar-woman's mouth, the following recipe for growing the magical plant: "Your majesty must make them bring in two pails of water some evening before you go to bed. In each of them you must wash yourself, and afterwards throw away the water under the bed. When you look under the bed next morning, two flowers will have sprung up, one fair and one ugly. The fair one you must eat; the ugly one you must let stand." The temptation, however, was too great for the lady. Having eaten the fair one and found it delicious, she proceeded to eat the ugly one, and gave birth in due time to two daughters, a fair and a loathly one. The latter, though hideous, is her sister's good angel, and eventually wedding the king's son, becomes the most beautiful woman in the world.[2] It will be remembered that the fakir in one of the Bengali tales already cited prescribes the juice of a pomegranate-flower to be taken with his drug. Annamese folklore recounts the history of a maiden who, walking in a garden, plucks and eats a lovely flower. Her parents (who seem to have had a shrewd opinion of religious celibates) suspected the bonze of a neighbouring pagoda of having dishonoured her, and sent her to the pagoda, where she was delivered of no fewer than five sons of marvellous powers, and all exactly alike. Questioned as to their names, the first calls himself The Strong, the second Steel-body-iron-liver, the third Search-cloud-drive-dust, the fourth The Dry, and the fifth The Damp. They get up a quarrel with the king, and ultimately compel him

[1] i. Grundtvig, 150. [2] Dasent, 345.

to yield his throne to Search-cloud, who is the wisest of the brothers.[1] In the *Pentameron* a nobleman's sister offers a prize to that one of her maids who succeeds in clearing a certain rosebush at a jump. All fail; and the lady herself, trying it, knocks off a leaf. With great adroitness she picks it up and swallows it unobserved, and thus wins the prize. After three days, mysterious pains seize her; and she learns with horror from a friendly fairy that no doubt she is pregnant from the roseleaf she has swallowed. This turns out to be the fact. A lovely baby-girl is born, for whom a strange destiny is in store. A spell is laid upon her by the fairies that if, at seven years of age, her mother be allowed to comb her, the comb will be left stuck in her hair, and she will thereupon die. The story follows a similar course to that of the Danish one just cited.[2] In a Tuscan folktale a woman wedded for many years, but childless, obtains a son by eating "a certain herb" pointed out to her by a fairy, to whom she promises in return a fair present. But she and her husband neglect to fulfil the promise; and to punish them the boy is born and remains of diminutive size.[3] The Passamaquoddies, a North American tribe of tolerably pure blood in New England, attribute the birth of a medicine-man, a hero of their folklore, to his mother's biting off every bush as she travelled through the woods. From one of these bushes, the narrative does not say which of them, she comes to be with child.[4]

Romances are, of course, literature, not folklore. In

[1] Landes, *Annam.*, 245.

[2] i. Basile, 249; i. *Pentamerone*, 238. The Italian fairies are always rather μοῖραι than what we understand by fairies.

[3] De Gubernatis, *Trad. Pop.*, 187. [4] iii. *Journ. Am. F.L.*, 273.

other words, they are the deliberate productions of civilisation, they are works of conscious art. Their authority, therefore, as evidence of tradition is greatly inferior to that with which the report of a folktale is invested. Folktales, when written down, cease to be traditions. They are merely evidence of tradition preserved for us by reporters. Their value depends on the accuracy and knowledge with which they have been reported. The more closely they represent the very words of the tellers of the tales—the bearers of the traditions—the more valuable, the more authentic, they are. Romances, on the other hand, cannot claim to be reports of traditions. They are subject to the laws of art, as developed under the influences of civilisation. Even when starting from real traditions, their aim is not accuracy but amusement. Whatever changes are required by the development of taste or fashion, whatever changes will from any cause add to the pleasure of the reader, their authors are at liberty—nay, they are bound—to make. But when all this is conceded there remains the fact that an immense number of romances start from tradition, and embody its characteristic barbarisms and its fantastic impossibilities. Of this kind is an incident in the Spanish *Romance de don Tristan* by Alonso de Salaya, written towards the end of the fifteenth century. It is related there that, Tristram being wounded in a transport of jealousy by King Mark, Isolte visited him; and the two lovers shed abundant tears. From these tears a lily sprang. "Every woman who eats of it forthwith feels herself pregnant; Queen Isolte ate of it to her sorrow."[1]

In the Annamite story of *The Lazy Man* mentioned

[1] Quoted by De Charencey, *Le Fils de la Vierge*, 25, from De Puymaigre, ii. *Les Vieux Auteurs Castillans*, 355.

just now, the fish had been washed in the man's urine. A variant, also from Annam, describes a sort of female Tom Thumb, born in answer to prayer, as eating the rind of a water-melon, the substance of which had been eaten by a prince. The prince, before throwing the rind away, had made water into it; and the heroine consequently became pregnant.[1] In both these cases it is the man's urine that confers the efficacy upon the food. A nasty Nubian tale ascribes the same result to a woman's drinking, under stress of great thirst, the urine of an ass.[2]

Other stories recall the German *Water Peter and Water Paul*, discussed in a previous chapter. A maiden in a Tjame tale, being thirsty, sees water spring from the midst of some rocks in the forest and fill a rocky basin. There she drinks and bathes. But when, on returning to her father who is at work hard by, he asks her to show him the spring that he may drink also, it is already dried up. Her subsequent pregnancy is said to be the result of having drunk of that spring. She gives birth to a son round as a cocoa-nut, and covered with a cocoa-nut envelope. He turns out to be a great magician. A princess penetrates his disguise and marries him. At night when he comes out of his envelope, his wife buries it and persuades him to exhibit himself in his true and beautiful manhood.[3] A Wallachian *märchen* brings before us a maiden condemned by the king, her father, to seclusion from her earliest infancy in a castle to which no men were allowed access.

[1] Landes, *op. cit.*, 174. [2] De Rochemonteix, 18.

[3] Landes, *Tjames*, 9. The Tjames are a mongrel race descended from aborigines of Annam who intermarried with Malay invaders. See ii. *L'Anthropologie*, 186.

His precautions were vain. At the age of sixteen a Gipsy woman gives her a flower she declares herself to have found in the forest, not far from the castle. The princess plays with it until the evening, and then puts it in water until the morning. The water becomes purple-red, like the lovely flower itself, with little golden and silver stars swimming in it, like the fragrant dust on the petals. The princess had never seen anything of the kind. She was so delighted that she dipped the whole flower into the water and crumpled it up. At last she lifted up the glass, and, finding the water had taken a delicious scent, she drank it to the bottom. Before long she had reason to repent. Her condition became manifest, and her stern father would listen to no denials. Beside himself with rage, he caused her to be fastened up in a cask and thrown into the sea. There she bore a son, and was, with the child, cast after a while on shore. The rest of the story unfortunately is not so much to her credit; for she forms a tender connection with an ogre, and plots against the son who has been her support and comforter in her outcast condition.[1] A Gipsy story from southern Hungary represents a childless woman as given by a witch a certain liquid, with instructions to pour it into a gourd, and drink it in the waxing of the moon. Unhappily, however, the child is born dead. Now, a still-born child becomes a Mulo, a kind of ghoul dwelling in the mountains and guarding hidden treasure. This prospect was so terrible to the woman and her husband, that the latter made a journey to the mountains, and at last got the child back from the Mulo-folk, and he grew up a clever man.[2]

[1] Schott, 262.

[2] Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Zig.*, 36; *Volksdicht.*, 245. Cf. *Ibid.*, 194, where milk is to be poured into the gourd.

Nor is it only by the mouth that supernatural impregnation has been fabled to take place. A variant from Varadzin of one of the South Slavonic tales quoted a few paragraphs back mentions a youth who was fated to kill his parents. Rather than fulfil so horrible a doom he burnt himself to death. But his heart remained intact and palpitating. A maiden passed by, saw and smelt the heart, and gave birth to a boy, who was no other than the first come to life again. He had struggled against his fate in vain, and in due course, though unwittingly, he slew his former parents.[1] In a Sanskrit romance, the Princess Chand Ráwati, bathing in the Ganges, sees a flower afloat on the water and takes it up to smell. It contains some *sperma genitale* which has escaped from a Rishi; the lady inhales this, with consequences readily guessed, having regard to the holiness of the ascetic. But in this case her son appropriately finds his way into the world by his mother's nose. It is satisfactory to add that she eventually marries the lad's father, and that the lad himself by his filial obedience and courage obtains immortality.[2] Even without the adventitious aid of a saint, the scent or the touch of flowers has been known in traditional songs and fairy tales to produce the same result. A Gipsy story from the Land beyond the Forest speaks of a woman who, by smelling a certain flower, became pregnant of a son, born in the form of a serpent; and in another, from southern Hungary, a childless queen receives from a beldam a camomile flower to bear in her bosom, on the stipulation she should give in exchange one of the sons whom she would bring into the world.[3] A Portuguese

[1] Dragomanov, in xii. *Archivio*, 275, quoting Valjavec.
[2] Capt. R. C. Temple, in iv. *F.L. Journ.*, 304.
[3] Von Wlislocki, *Volksdicht.*, 213, 336.

romanceiro speaks of an enchanted herb, which any woman who touched would at once feel herself fertilised. A ballad current in Asturia narrates that the princess Alexandra was fated to tread on so apparently innocent a herb as borage. The king of Spain, her father, with his parental eyes, detected that there was something the matter. He summoned the doctors; and when she had given birth to a boy he executed summary justice upon her by cutting off her head.[1] In Sardinia the folk tell of a maiden who, while buying some roses from a woman, took them up to examine, when they all fell to pieces. The woman, annoyed, cursed her to become pregnant by the petals; and her imprecation was only too effective.[2] Here it is the curse which provides the magical power. A different origin is attributed to it in a Bulgarian ballad. A widow, we are told, had nine sons who were all carried off by the plague. One of them was his mother's idol. She buried him in her courtyard, and every day she came to weep upon his grave. In obedience to a voice proceeding from the earth, she gathered two hyacinth flowers which grew upon the tomb, hid them in her bosom, and thus conceived afresh. A son was born, over whom she uttered the wish: "Mayest thou one day reave the kingdom from the king!" When her words were reported to the monarch he ordered the boy to be thrown into an underground dungeon, and there left. After several years the king was attacked by a horrible malady; grass grew between his bones and his eyes littered mice. He naturally believed that this was the consequence of the widowed mother's curses, and sent to the dungeon for the boy's bones, for the purpose of forwarding them to her, as the only consolation in his power to give her. But

[1] De Charencey, *Le Fils de la Vierge*, 26, 27. [2] Mango, 101.

the messengers found the boy alive and reading the gospel, which was held before him by Saint Friday, while Saint Sunday further contributed to his convenience by holding the candle. The youth, fated by his mother's words, arose from his pious exercises, and going to the king, tore out his eyes, cut off his hands, and turned him out of doors to beg his bread. Then he placed himself upon the throne, trifling the while with a sceptre that weighed, mere toy that it was, some three hundred pounds.[1]

I have cited fully the substance of this ballad as given by M. Dragomanov, because that scholar is inclined to trace the influence of Buddhism in the last touch. Buddha, he says, is considered as a man of great physical force, and in several places his sceptres of considerable weight are shown. The learned critic specifies none of the places in question; but we may for the nonce admit the literal accuracy of his statement. He does not commit himself, however, to the assertion that no other hero of legend or fairy tale had ever been possessed of gigantic strength or material "properties" of unusual proportions. He merely assumes it; and upon the validity of this assumption his reasoning is founded. Gautama no doubt underwent many incarnations; and perhaps European students may yet be persuaded to hold that the paladin Roland was a Bodisat and Thor a full-blown Buddha. They will then probably extend their articles of belief over the rest of the world, including the countless personages of wondrous might and bulk that swarm in the traditions of the Slavonic race, to which, in great part at all events, the Bulgars belong. The task of converting them may be commended to M. Dragomanov;

[1] *Compte Rendu du Congrès*, 47. The personification of holy days is not uncommon in folktales, especially in the east of Europe.

and, meanwhile, we may dismiss the suggestion of Buddhist influence on this Bulgarian ballad.

But it is not only flowers and herbs that possess the magical virtue of causing conception by the touch. In an Eskimo tradition a man who longs for offspring is advised to set off in his kayak to the open sea. When he hears a voice like that of a child crying, he must go towards it; and he will then find a worm, which he must bring home and throw on his wife's body. Having followed this counsel, he beholds the worm disappear in the woman's body; and soon afterward she gives birth to a son, who becomes a seal-fisher of marvellous powers.[1] According to a story given by Dr. von Wlislocki as current among the Armenian settlers at the foot of the Carpathians, a childless queen picked up in her garden a half-dead bird. She restored it to life, putting its bill between her lips to give it breath. Her saliva touched its tongue and gave it human speech. By its directions she hid in the garden at midnight and watched until a Luckwife—that is to say, a Fate or Norn—came to bathe in the pool. Then she caught up the golden veil left by the Luckwife lying on the margin, and ran off with it. Binding it round her body, she wore it next her skin for nine months, until she at length brought forth a lovely daughter.[2]

Another form of assistance by birds is found among the Zulus. The birth of Unthlatu was on this wise. Two pigeons came to his mother, who was a chief's wife. One said: "Vukutu;" the other asked: "Why do you say 'Vukutu,' since she has no children?" They bargain with

[1] Rink, 437.

[2] Von Wlislocki, *Bukowinaer*, 72. As to the power of saliva on a bird's tongue, see *ibid.*, *Volksdicht.*, 384.

her for a feed of castor-oil berries in exchange for the promise of a child. When they had eaten the berries they scarified her in two places on the loins, saying: "You will now have a child." She accordingly gave birth to a beautiful boy, whom she hid in a boa's skin to save him from the envy of her fellow-wives; for they had only given birth to brutes. In a variant the pigeons direct the woman to take a horn and cup herself, draw out a clot of blood, place it in a pot, lute it down and only uncover it in the ninth month. She acts accordingly; and on opening the pot a child is found within, to the astonishment of herself and her husband. Here, too, she has to hide the boy from the envy of the other women.[1]

A favourite *märchen* in Italy and Sicily is one which approaches far more nearly to the Danae type of the Perseus group. As told in Sicily, a king unblessed with

[1] Callaway, *Tales*, 66, 72. In another variant the blood is drawn from the woman's knees, placed in two jars, and becomes a boy and a girl. Theal, 139. A Blackfoot story ascribes the origin of Kutoyis, or Clot of Blood, a hero of great prowess, to a clot of buffalo-blood brought home by a hunter and put in the kettle on the fire. Grinnell, *Blackfoot L.T.*, 30; Maclean, in vi. *Journ. Am. F.L.*, 167. The Rabbit in Siouan mythology makes the Young Rabbit from a clot of buffalo's blood. J. Owen Dorsey, in v. *Journ. Am. F.L.*, 295. In an Esthonian *märchen* a childless queen receives from an old woman an egg to be brooded in her bosom for three months. At the end of that time a living female embryo is hatched, which grows to the size of an unborn child. When that size is reached the queen also gives birth to a son; and the two are treated as twin brother and sister. Kreutzwald, 341. Stories of children hatched from eggs are by no means infrequent: Hodgetts, 194; Day, 93; i. *Folklore*, 49 (already cited), for example. They are perhaps more usual in sacred sagas: see a Fijian saga, i. *Mem. Anthr. Soc.*, 203; and the classical and other legends mentioned by Liebrecht in a note to *Gerv. Till.*, 73.

issue summons a wizard, to inquire of him whether his queen will have a babe, or not. The wizard replies that she will have a daughter, who in her fourteenth year will be impregnated by the sun. The child is accordingly born, and shut up with her nurse in a tower where the sun cannot penetrate. One day the little maiden finds a pointed bone in her food; and with its aid she scratches the wall of the tower until she scrapes a hole in it. Through this hole the sun shines on her and fulfils the prediction. A daughter is born in due course and exposed, but found by a king's son, who ultimately falls in love with her, and weds her after learning of what ancestry she comes.[1] The opening of this tale admits of many variations having nothing to do with the Supernatural Birth. Thus, in a Greek story from Epirus, a woman prays to the sun for a daughter, promising him that he may take her away when she is twelve years old. When she obtains the child, however, she seeks to evade the fulfilment of her promise, and hides the girl in the house, stopping up all windows, chinks and holes whereby the sun can reach her. But she forgets to stop up the keyhole; and the sun sends a ray that way into the house to seize and bring him the maiden.[2] A Florentine story represents the astrologer as predicting that the lass will be carried away by the wind; and all

[1] i. Gonzenbach, 177. Versions are given from Sulmona in the Abruzzi, iii. De Nino, 1; from Pisa, Comparetti, 195; from Rufina in Tuscany, Pitrè, *Toscane*, 8. The circumstances of the conception differ very slightly in all these. Two or three years ago the same story was discovered in the island of Möe, belonging to Denmark. It is stated to follow Fräulein Gonzenbach's tale point by point; and M. Feilberg is bold enough to declare that it had passed from her collection into the mouths of the Danish folk in that island. iii. *Am Urquell*, 331.

[2] i. Von Hahn, 245.

precautions against her destiny are vain.[1] In another Sicilian tradition the soothsayer is wisely vaguer, his denunciations only extending to a dreadful fate at the age of eleven. A bird comes in through the hole the maiden has bored in the wall of her tower, and becomes a man. He is, in fact, an enchanted prince; and the misfortune she undergoes is the loss of her beauty in disenchanting him—a woe of light account in fairyland, where the virtuous are ever rewarded.[2] A tale from the Azores relates that a king to whom a daughter had been born consulted his book of astrology; and in obedience to the directions he there found he confined her at the age of twelve in a tower having only one aperture, by which food was conveyed to her, and commanded that no bones be left in the meat supplied. By accident his command was disobeyed; a duke dressed, like Mackineely in the Irish tale, in female attire gains an opportunity of talking with her through the aperture. Who could resist such a temptation? The bone she had found in her food she utilises to enlarge the opening, so as to get out and flee with him.[3] A similar illustration of the impossibility of cheating fate occurs in an old Hebrew manuscript. King Solomon, we learn from this veracious authority, had a beautiful daughter whose horoscope disclosed that she was to marry a poor Israelite of low birth. He therefore built a very high tower with no entrance, and there he imprisoned her with a stock of victuals. For some time his precautions appeared successful; but after a while a poor youth, exhausted from long travel, took shelter for the night in the carcase of an ox. When he had fallen asleep a large bird obligingly carried

[1] Imbriani, 397. [2] i. Gonzenbach, 167.
[3] Braga, i. *Contos*, 104. Cf. iii. De Nino, 263.

carcase and youth up to the roof of the tower. There to his great surprise he found himself the next morning; and, like the prince borne by the Enchanted Horse in the *Arabian Nights*, he lost no time in making the princess' acquaintance. They speedily fell in love with one another; but, with scruples that King Solomon perhaps would hardly have appreciated, he wrote a marriage contract in his own blood, calling upon God and the angels Michael and Gabriel to witness it.[1] In a modern Transylvanian Gipsy version the foreign "common" man is carried up by a magical wooden bird, with which he has been gifted by Saint Nicholas in return for hospitality when the saint appeared to him in beggar's guise. Though a favourite with the saint, his conscience does not seem to have been quite so tender as that of the poor Israelite.[2] These tales carry us back to that of Gilgamos, as it is recounted by Ælian.

Happily I am not called upon to stand sponsor here for every irregular birth in a fairy tale. Cases of birth direct from fruit, diminutive births, impregnation in the ordinary way but by a supernatural being, and other instances, therefore need not detain us. But we ought not altogether to overlook the widespread story of *The Lucky Fool*. In the *Pentameron* Basile has given us what may be regarded as the typical form. Pervonto is a ninny who, going to cut wood in the forest, finds three youths asleep and perspiring in the hot sunshine. Taking pity on them, he sets up a shade of oak-leaves over their heads; and on their awaking they endow him with the power of obtaining anything by a wish. When the hero has made up a bundle of wood he sets himself astride of it and wishes it to carry him home. On the

[1] Köhler in *The Academy*, 21st March 1891, citing Buber's edition of *Midrasch Tanchumar*. [2] Von Wlislocki, *Volksdicht.*, 360.

way he passes on his strange palfrey the king's palace; and the princess Vastolla, beholding him from the window, bursts out into loud laughter. Pervonto retorts by wishing her to become pregnant by him. The wish takes effect. Her children are twin boys; and at a banquet given by the king, to which all his male subjects are summoned, they identify their father. The king, enraged, encloses them with his daughter and Pervonto in a cask, and flings the cask into the sea. Again Pervonto's magical wish becomes useful; for by its means he saves them all from peril, changes himself into a fair youth, and at last is reconciled to the king and recognised as Vastolla's husband. Whence Basile, or the lady into whose mouth he puts the tale, draws the very relevant moral: Man proposes, God disposes.[1]

[1] i. Basile, 47; i. *Pentamerone*, 43.

CHAPTER V

THE SUPERNATURAL BIRTH IN SAGAS.

HITHERTO, dealing exclusively with *märchen*, or tales told for simple amusement, we have found the incident of the Supernatural Birth, outside the cycle of the Perseus myth, widely scattered in Europe, in Asia as far east as Annam, southward among the Zulu kraals of Africa and northward among the snows of Greenland. Nor does it occur in modern folklore only. It formed one of the chain of events in a tale of wonder carefully guarded for us through the long silence of three thousand years by an Egyptian mummy, to whose arms it had been intrusted at his burial, a precious fragment of the literature he had known and loved in life, and therefore deemed a gift appropriate to his service in his everlasting home. But the story of Perseus was, at all events in early ages, believed as an actual occurrence by the simple folk of Greece and wherever Greek influence extended the hero's cult. Has the possibility of a Supernatural Birth of this kind been credited elsewhere and under other conditions of culture? In a land dominated by Christian thought the question seems superfluous. The mystery taught by the creeds of the Church, however, is believed to be something apart from all the other beliefs of the world, something altogether above

them, alike in its evidence and its consequences. Christians in thus thinking overlook the fact that to the believer in any religion its evidences are undeniable and its claims are supreme. The fact is that the incident in question is part and parcel of many other religions than the Christian, and is also gravely accepted among what we may call the secular and quasi-historical traditions of tribes in various parts of the Old and New World. Beyond this, as we shall see in another chapter, pregnancy is held actually producible by means analogous to those described in the legends, means outside the ordinary operations of nature. Into the bearing of these facts on the dogma of the Supernatural Birth of Jesus Christ, or on the historical evidence on which that dogma rests, it is not my purpose to inquire. This is a quesion of apologetics, not of folklore.

Many stories of Supernatural Birth belong to the cosmogonic legends of savage and barbarous tribes. These we may for the most part pass over. What may have happened to the monsters that in the dawn of things were the first to loom upon the horizon is hardly relevant. They may have had reasons of their own for their extraordinary conduct. Our business is with beings conceived in distinctly human terms and something like human proportions. The distinction may be hard to define, seeing that savage tribes hold savage opinions as to the power of men and brutes (or of some men, at least, and some brutes) to change their forms at will. In the same way *märchen* have no clear dividing line in the savage mind from sagas (or stories believed in as recording actual events) nor religious narratives from secular histories. It is one of the characteristics of savagery that these things are not as yet differentiated. Intellectual evolution is going on; but until a

much higher grade of civilisation be reached we cannot be sure that the divergence is complete. If, therefore, some of the stories I am going to refer to seem scarcely within the limits I have laid down, these difficulties in the way of definition must be borne in mind.

We began our review of *märchen* containing the incident of the Supernatural Birth by examples of the results of eating a magical fish or fruit. The fish is a means of impregnation comparatively little known in sagas. A legend of the Tupis of Brazil, however, bearing resemblances to stories of the type of *Beauty and the Beast*, represents the hero, a supernatural being, as fertilising a young virgin by means of a mysterious fish.[1] A curious piece of gossip is recorded by John Aubrey concerning Archbishop Abbot's mother, who is said to have dreamed that if she ate a jack the son then in her womb would be a great man. Accordingly, "she arose early the next morning and went with her pail to the river-side (which runneth by the house, now an ale-house, the sign of the Three Mariners) to take up some water, and in the water in the pail she found a good jack, which she dressed, and ate it all, or very near." Her son in due time was born, and grew up to be Archbishop of Canterbury.[2] If not exactly a great man, he was an able and honest one and a patriot, who suffered, by no means alone, from the superstition, or the malignity, of his successor, the "martyr" Laud.

On the other hand, the eating of fruit is found in

[1] Featherman, *Chiapo-Mar.*, 351. Owing to this writer's method of heaping his authorities together at the end of each section, a practice as mysterious as any recorded of savages, I have been unable to discover on what authority this statement is made by him, or what are the details of the story.

[2] Aubrey, *Miscellanies*, 58.

both hemispheres. In India it is told, as we might have expected, of the birth of Râjâ Rasâlû. Rânî Lonân, one of the two wives of Râjâ Sâlbâhan of Siâlkot, fell in love with her stepson Pûran, and, because he did not return her passion, traduced him to her husband, who cut off his hands and feet and threw him into a well. Pûran, however, like the hero of the Bulgarian ballad, survived this cruel treatment. After some years he was rescued by the Gurû Gorakhnâth, a Brahman of great sanctity, and became a celebrated fakir. Not knowing who he really was, the Rânî and her husband, desirous of offspring, came to him to pray for a son. He induced her to confess her crime; then, revealing himself, he gave her a grain of rice to eat, and told her she would bear a son who would be learned and brave and holy. That son was Râjâ Rasâlû, a monarch identified with the historical Sri Syâlapati Deva.[1] Gogá, a favourite Mahratta saint, is said to have been childless until his guardian deity bestowed upon him two barleycorns, one of which he gave to his wife and the other to his favourite mare. A son and the famous steed Javadia were the consequence.[2] The ancestry of the present, or Manchu, dynasty of China is traced to a heavenly maiden, who, having bathed one day in a certain pool, found on the skirt of her raiment a red fruit, placed there by a magpie. After eating it she found herself pregnant, and was delivered of a son of remarkable appearance, who spoke on the day of his birth. In obedience to a super-

[1] i. *Leg. Panjâb*, 1; Steele, 247. Cf. Swynnerton, *Rájá Rasálu*, 3, where the rice is omitted.

[2] Elliot, i. *N. W. Prov.*, 256, note. Other accounts assert that the two barleycorns, or cocoa-nuts, were given to Gogá's mother. Other examples in iii. *N. Ind. N. and Q.*, 205, 243.

natural voice she called him Aisin-gioro, 'the heaven-born to restore order to disturbed nations.' Having grown up, he embarked in a boat and drifted down the river, until he reached a place where families of three surnames were in constant broils. There he landed, and was breaking off willow branches, when a warrior, coming to draw water, saw him. Amazed at the hero's aspect, the warrior fetched his people, who came and inquired who he was. "I am the son of the heavenly maiden Fokolun," replied the youth, "ordained by heaven to restore peace among you." They took him and made him king; and he reigned there in Odoli city, in the desert of Omohi, east of the mountains of Ch'ang-pai-shan. A Japanese tradition, reported by Père Amyot, appears to be a variant of the same story. It relates that three heavenly maids, of whom Fokolun was one, descended to bathe. While they were praying Fokolun saw a tree half-covered with black cherries. She proceeded to eat of them, with the consequences we know. Being in this condition, she could not return with her sisters until she had brought forth her son and handed him over to a fisherman to be bred up.[1] Fokolun is identified by Amyot with a goddess whom he calls Pussa. It is quite possible that the present dynasty of China owes this legendary origin to a similar feeling to that which dictated so many of the mediæval miracle-stories in Europe. Fo-hi, the original founder of the Empire, was said to have sprung from a virgin named Ching-Mon, who ate a certain flower found on her garment after bathing. The striking resem-

[1] James, *The Long White Mountain*, 31, note, citing a Chinese chronicle; Charencey, *Le Fils de la Vierge*, 15, citing Köppen, *Die Religion des Buddha*; *ibid.*, 8, citing *Ambassade mémorable à l'Empereur du Japon.*

blance to this tale of that of Fokolun is due to conscious forgery as little, and as much, as the achievements of Christian saints, equalling and surpassing the wonders recorded in the Bible.[1]

The magpie mentioned in the Chinese version of the legend just recorded is replaced by a crow in the analogous incident at the opening of the *Volsungasaga*. A childless king and queen, we are told, besought the gods for an heir. Frigg, the mother-goddess, heard their prayers and sent them, in the guise of a crow, the daughter of the giant Hrimnir, and with her an apple, of which when the queen had eaten, she soon perceived that her wish would come to pass.[2] In the fiftieth rune, that beautiful postscript to the Kalevala, Marjatta, the fair and gentle virgin, is addressed by the red bilberry and invited to pluck and eat. With the help of a staff she reaches down the mysterious fruit; but from the ground it climbs her shoe and then her knee, and so upward to her mouth, into which it slips and is swallowed. In this way she conceives. Her parents' reproaches are met by the assertion that she is the paramour of none unless it be of fire, and that she will bear a hero who will rule the mighty, albeit Väinämöinen himself. In her extremity she applies to Ruotus for the vapour-bath which Finnish women are accustomed to take to facilitate delivery; but from him and his loathsome wife she gets nothing better than a contemptuous recommendation of a stable in the fir-forest. There, in a vapour-bath of the breath of horses, her child is born, and cradled in a

[1] Charencey, *Le Fils*, 14, citing Barrow's *Voyage to China*. Cf. Maury, *Légendes Pieuses*, part 1, for numerous mediæval examples of miracles in competition with the Bible.

[2] Rydberg, 156, citing the *Volsungasaga*.

manger. She cares for him as a mother; but after a while he suddenly disappears, and she goes seeking him everywhere. In her wandering she meets a star, and, sinking before it on her knees, she asks:

"'O thou star, that God created!
Of my son dost thou know nothing,
Where my darling son abideth,
Where my golden apple tarries?'
And the star made haste to answer:
'If I knew I would not say it;
He it is who hath created
Me to gleam thro' cold and evil,
Me to sparkle in the darkness.'"

The moon gives her the like answer. Then she meets the sun; and the sun tells her:

"'Well I know thy little loved one.
He it is who hath created
Me thro' all the hours of daylight
In the sheen of gold to dazzle,
Me to glint in sheen of silver.
Well I know thy little loved one.
Yonder, woman, is thy darling,
Plunged in marshes to the girdle,
In the moor e'en to the armpit.'"

Thus directed, Marjatta found her son and brought him home. He grew up beautiful but nameless. His mother called him Floweret, but strangers dubbed him Idler. An old man named Virokannas came to baptize and bless him, but hesitated to do so ere he had been examined and proved. Then came Väinämöinen old and trusty, who sentenced the boy, as he had been taken from the marsh and was sprung from a berry, to be laid upon the ground of the berry-bearing meadow, or taken to the marsh, and

his head crushed with a tree. But the son of the berry replies:

> "'O thou old man without insight,
> Without insight, full of folly!
> Thou hast given a foolish sentence;
> Ill thou hast the laws expounded!'"

Väinämöinen himself had taken the child of his own mother and thrown it into the water to redeem his own life. The boy reminds him of this, and hints that he will have to pay the penalty of his deed. Virokannas then quickly baptizes the boy, and blesses him to become king of Karjala and guardian of all powers.

I have narrated this incident somewhat at length, to exhibit the obvious mixture of heathen and Christian elements which it contains. Marjatta, there can be little doubt, is the Virgin Mary; Ruotus has been identified with Herod; and the discomfiture and departure of Väinämöinen, which follow the cited passages, point very clearly to the expulsion of paganism as typified by the mighty figure of the great sorcerer. Lönnröt's method in the compilation of the epic from fragmentary songs leaves much to be desired in the certainty of traditional origin of many of its verses, perhaps of entire episodes; and the one before us may not be free from suspicion. Yet it is hardly likely that the poet would have had recourse to the savage conceit of the berry, had he not found it already in the legend he has presented to us. It would be difficult to match it in the sagas of modern Europe. As we saw just now, the analogous conceit of the fish is found in the case of Archbishop Abbot in no bolder shape than a dream. So the Irish *Life of Saint Molasius of Devenish*, preserved to us in a manuscript, written, probably from dictation, in

the sixteenth century—that is to say, not long before the English tale became current—presents the holy man's mother as dreaming "that she got seven fragrant apples; and the last apple of them that she took into her hand her grasp could not contain it for its size; gold (as it seemed to her) was not lovelier than the apple." Her husband interprets the dream of "an offspring, excellent and famous, with which the mouths of all Ireland shall be filled:" an interpretation of course justified by the saint's birth.[1] We may conjecture that the legend in an earlier form related that impregnation took place by means of an apple; but before it was put into writing, perhaps long before, the incident had been modified by the slowly growing intelligence of the folk who related it.

To the aborigines of North America, however, this unusual mode of generation has always been within the limits of belief. Yehl, the famous hero of the North-west Coast, effected one of his numerous births by transforming himself into a spear of cedar or a blade of grass, or, as it is t old in a variant, a drop of water, and being swallowed by his principal opponent's daughter, or sister, as she was drinking. Most legendary heroines have been satisfied with one such miracle. This lady seems to have been

[1] ii. *Silva Gad.*, 19, translating a MS. of the sixteenth century in the British Museum. Stories of dreams of this kind are found everywhere. Compare, for example, Ragnhild's dream of her son Harold Fairhair (i. Morris and Magnússon's *Heimskringla*, 83) and the well-known stories of Athelstan's mother and Cyrus' mother. So Gorm, king of Denmark, dreamed of the sons, Knut and Harald, who were to be born of his wife Thyra, daughter of Ethelred, king of England. Saxo, 319 (Elton's version, 387). According to a writer quoted by Southey (iii. *Commonplace Bk.*, 753) Joan of Arc's mother dreamed she gave birth to a thunderbolt.

specially unfortunate; and we do not wonder at the suspicions of her natural guardian, when we are expressly told that she was not allowed to eat or drink anything until the chief had examined it, as she had become pregnant from eating certain things many times before. One man cannot know all Yehl's adventures, as the Thlinkit very truly assert; for all their accounts differ. The adventure we are now dealing with was undertaken for the purpose of rescuing the sun, moon and stars, which his antagonist, whose favourite grandson he thus became, had stored away in three mysterious chests. On a previous occasion he had assumed the unlikely form of a small pebble on the sea-shore. A woman whose sons had all been slain by her brother was pacing the beach and weeping for the dead, when a large fish—it is equally credible whether a dolphin or a whale—pitied her and spoke to her, telling her to swallow the pebble and drink some sea-water. She did so, and bore a child, Yehl, who avenged her on his uncle. After all his various achievements on behalf of mankind, Yehl became the totem of the Raven Clan of the Thlinkit.[1] When America was discovered, the Aztecs, though they had not emerged from the Stone Age, were, compared with the Thlinkit, a civilised people. Yet they continued to believe in the generation of their famous god Quetzalcoatl in a similar manner to that of Yehl. One

[1] iii. Bancroft, 99, apparently quoting Holmberg, *Ethn. Skizz.*; Ensign Niblack, in *Nat. Mus. Rep.*, 1888, 379. The allied people, the Koniagas of the southern shores of Alaska, have a similar tradition concerning Elkh, the founder of their race. The Thlinkit and Koniagan traditions seem in fact to be one and the same. Featherman, *Aoneo-Mar.*, 458. The Lenâpe tradition of Nanabozho, as reported by Lindstrom about 1650, seems to attribute that hero's birth to his mother's drinking out of a creek. Brinton, *Lenâpe*, 131.

account relates that he owed his birth to a precious green stone, identified by Captain Bourke with the turquoise, which his mother Chimalma found one day while sweeping, and swallowed.[1]

I shall have to recur to American traditions; but I must first mention other instances of pregnancy from eating or drinking. Heitsi-Eibib, the Hottentot ancestor-god, owed his birth to this cause. In one of the legends a young girl picks a kind of juicy grass, chews it and swallows the sap. Thence becoming pregnant, she gives birth to the hero. In another legend it is a cow that eats of a certain grass, and Heitsi-Eibib is consequently born as a bull-calf.[2] In the saga of *Ardshi-Bordshi* we are told that a childless queen procured from a hermit a handful of earth to be boiled in sesame oil in a porcelain vessel. On boiling it, behold! it was changed into barley porridge, which she ate, but neglected to eat the whole of it, as the hermit commanded. When she had eaten she found herself "in blessed circumstances," and bore Vikramâditya, a Bodisat and a king of renown. Her maid, having finished what was left of the porridge, was also delivered of a boy, who became the Bodisat's faithful companion.[3] Here, as M. Cosquin remarks, we are reminded of the *märchen* in the *Pentameron*, already cited. The material eaten bears us back to á story alleged to be part of the Siamese cosmology.

[1] Capt. Bourke, in ix. *Rep. Bur. Ethn.*, 590, quoting Mendieta.

[2] Hahn, *Tsuni-||goam*, 69, 68.

[3] Busk, *Sagas from the Far East*, 267. Unhappily Miss Busk's translations in this work cannot be trusted; but it contains the only English version of the *Ardshi-Bordshi* with which I am acquainted. i. Cosquin, 69. Another version of the story, as told by an illiterate Buddhist monk of Zain Shaben in north-western Mongolia, is given iii. *F.L. Journ.*, 321.

After a gradual degeneration of the human race, we are assured, the sea will be dried up and the earth destroyed by fire. Converted into dust and ashes, it will be purified by a wind, which will carry off all remains of the conflagration. So sweet an odour will then exhale from the purified soil that it will draw from heaven a female angel, who will take of this sweet-smelling substance and eat. The pleasure will cost her dear; for she will no more be able to ascend to her native home, and by means of her strange food she will conceive and give birth to twelve sons and daughters, who will repopulate the world. For an inconceivably long period this new race will remain gross and ignorant, until in the fulness of time a god will be born to dissipate the darkness by teaching the true religion, the virtues that must be practised, the vices that must be shunned and all other sciences needful to be known, giving to the people scriptures where all these things are explained, and writing upon their hearts the holy law, so long effaced from the mind of man.[1]

The *Shih King*, one of the sacred books of the Chinese, contains an ode intended to be recited at a sacrifice in the ancestral temple of Shang. It refers to the origin of Shang's father Hsieh. His mother was a concubine of Khû, a ruler who flourished in the twenty-fifth century before Christ. She was bathing, as these Chinese heroines frequently are on such occasions, when a heaven-com-

[1] *Voyage de Siam des Pères Jesuites*, 296. In one of the Magic Songs of the Finns, Louhiatar swallows iron hail, the siftings of Tuoni's mortar, and after thirty summers is disburdened of a progeny which "become all sorts of sicknesses, a thousand causes of injury." Hon. J. Abercromby, in iv. *Folklore*, 40. Probably this too is a cosmological myth.

missioned swallow dropped an egg, which she took and gulped down, becoming in this way the mother of Hsieh.[1] The lady is not here, as in the case of other founders of Chinese dynasties, represented as a maiden. Yu's mother, for instance, appears to be thus regarded. A pearl, a substance not more unpromising than a pebble, fell in her bosom, and she swallowed it. According to one version the boy was born from her breast.[2] A Mongolian tale traces the origin of the Chinese nation to a Khan's daughter, who compelled a poor Bandé to disgorge a precious stone as big as a sheep's eye, which he had stolen from two men, and swallowed. As soon as he brought it up, she seized and swallowed it in her turn. It rendered her pregnant. The Bandé, by reading a charm, turned her into a she-ass; and in this form she gave birth to twin boys, one good, the other evil. From them the Chinese nation is descended.[3] Several Tartar tribes ascribe their lineage to Alankava, the virgin daughter of Gioubiné, son of Bolduz, king of the Mongols. One night a great light awakened and embraced her, entering her mouth and passing through her body. As this peculiar proceeding was repeated every night, in order to dissipate suspicions of her virtue (for she had become pregnant) the chiefs of the national assembly were introduced into her chamber to witness the occurrence. When her time was come she gave birth to three boys, each of whom was the ancestor of a tribe, and from one of whom Genghis Khan and Tamerlane descended.[4] An Irish tradition more modestly (pro-

[1] iii. *Sacred Books*, 307. [2] De Charencey, *Le Fils*, 13.

[3] iv. *F.L. Record*, 23.

[4] Liebrecht in a note to *Gerv. Tilb.*, 72, quoting d'Herbelot. Cf. De Charencey, *Le Fils*, 13, where a similar Chinese tale is mentioned.

bably for reasons discussed on a previous page) presents the mother of Kieran, the first saint born on Hibernian soil, as only dreaming that a star fell into her mouth.[1]

The heroic traditions of Ireland—at least those of Ulster—do not stick at a dream. Both Conchobar and Cuchulainn were of supernatural birth. Cathba, the noble Druid, was thirsty one night; and Ness, his wife, finding nothing in the house, went down to the river Conchobar and drew from thence, filtering the water through her veil. When she brought it to her husband and a light was struck, lo! there were two worms in the water. Thereupon Cathba drew his sword and forced his wife, under threat of death, to drink what she had brought for him. She drank two mouthfuls, and swallowed at each mouthful one of the worms. She soon found she had conceived; and it was of those worms she had conceived, though later times discredited this, asserting that the king of Ulster was her lover and the father of her child Conchobar.[2] This mode of conception was a family failing, for Cuchulainn, Conchobar's nephew, was born in the same way. His mother, Dechtire, Conchobar's sister, returning from the funeral of a foster-son of whom she had been very fond, asked for a drink in a bronze cup. As she put the cup to her lips she felt a little creature enter her mouth with the drink. After drinking she lay down to sleep, and a man appeared to her in a dream, telling her, among other things, that

[1] ii. *Silva Gad.*, 1, translating a MS. written in 1780-82, which in its turn is a transcript of a translation from a Latin life of this somewhat doubtful saint, printed in the *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ* at Louvain, 1645. The MS. in question is in the British Museum.

[2] vi. *Rev. Celt.*, 179; D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Épopée Celtique*, 16; both translating MSS. of the fourteenth century now in the library of the Royal Irish Academy at Dublin.

he had been her foster-son, that now he had entered her womb and she was pregnant of him, and that he was to be called Setanta. This man was Lug, one of the ancient Celtic divinities, identified with the grandson of Balor, the mythical warrior of Tory Island.[1]

The manuscripts in which both these stories are preserved are much older than those that record the dreams preceding the births of Saints Kieran and Molasius. Yet the life of Saint Molasius, modern though it be in the recension we possess, attributes to its hero the power so often wielded by an Indian fakir. When he was journeying, with certain of his clerics, in the land of Carbery he saw a woman milking, who replied courteously and even generously to a request for a drink for his attendant. In return, she prayed for the saint's intercession to be relieved of her barrenness, for hitherto she was childless. Then Molasius bade her: "Call thy husband; let him take my cup to the well and bring us back its fill of water in it." When the water was given into his hand he blessed and consecrated it, and passed it to the woman to drink, prophesying that henceforth she should be pregnant and bear a son, who was to be "good, miraculous, saintly, wonder-working, righteous." Thus was born "the very noble bishop Finnacha," so named by Molasius when he gave his mother to drink.[2] The *Book of the Dun Cow* at the end of the eleventh century gives a similar incident in a much more savage form. Dermot, king of Ireland, had

[1] D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Épopée Celtique*, 37, translating *Leabhar na hUidhre* (*Book of the Dun Cow*), MS. dating back to about the year 1100. See another translation, ix. *Rev. Celt.*, 12. For Balor's story as given in modern folklore, see *ante*, p. 15.

[2] ii. *Silva Gad.*, 23.

several wives, of whom Mughain was unhappy, because she had no children and the king was purposing to dismiss her. So she sought out Finnian and bishop Aedh, and implored their succour. They blessed water and gave it her to drink; but the result was nothing more encouraging than a lamb. Finnian consoled her as best he could for the mishap, and blessed more water. The next time she brought forth a salmon literally of silver. This, of course, was appropriated by the holy man for the service of the church as material for a reliquary and other sacred objects. Then he and bishop Aedh made another and supreme effort. They blessed her, and one of them put water into his cup and gave it to the queen, who both drank of it and washed in it. She ought perhaps to have done this before, for "by this process she found herself with child, and, this time, had a son, who was Aedh Sláine."[1]

Before considering other stories of impregnation by drinking, let me refer to one more Irish tale. It concerns the birth of Boethíne, son of Cred, the daughter of Ronán, king of Leinster, and is found in the *Leabhar breac*, a manuscript of the beginning of the fifteenth century. The maiden gathered cress on which the *sperma genitale* of a certain robber, Findach by name, had just fallen, and ate it, "and thereof was born the everliving Boethín."[2] This unsavoury story reminds us of the Princess Chand Ráwati in the Sanskrit romance. It bears even a closer resemblance to two legends from opposite quarters of the globe. One of them relates to a Peruvian goddess, Cavillaca. She

[1] ii. *Silva Gad.*, 89, translating *Leabhar na hUidhre*.

[2] Prof. Whitley Stokes, in ii. *Rev. Celt.*, 199, translating the *Leabhar breac*, a MS. written shortly before 1411, now in the Royal Irish Academy.

was a beautiful maiden who spurned the advances of the gods. One day she sat down to weave a mantle at the foot of a lucma-tree. The wise Coniraya Uiracocha thereupon turned himself into a beautiful bird, and sat in the boughs of the tree. He took some of his semen, made it into the likeness of a ripe and luscious lucma, and dropped it at the maiden's feet. She picked it up, ate it with much relish, and immediately conceived. In due course she gave birth to a son. When the boy could crawl, she called an assembly of the gods, and, indignantly protesting her virginity, demanded which of them was the father of the child. As nobody came forward to claim the honour, she put the little one on the ground, saying: "Doubtless his father will be the one to whom he crawls, and at whose feet he rests." The child crawled to the feet of a ragged beggar, who sat humbly in the lowest place of all. The beggar was Coniraya; but Cavillaca, not recognising him, disdained the thought of being mated with such dirt and squalor; and, catching up her boy, she fled from his pursuit, though he assumed magnificent golden robes and divine splendour, until she came to the sea-coast of Pachacamac, where she and the child, entering the sea, were changed into two rocks, yet visible long after the Spanish Conquest, and doubtless to the present day.[1] The other legend is that of the nymph Adrikâ in the *Mahâbhârata*. Being by the curse of some god metamorphosed into a fish, Adrikâ feeds on a leaf dropped into the water by the favourite agency of a bird—in this instance, a hawk.

[1] Francisco de Avila's Narrative, translated by Markham, *Rites and Laws*, 125. It is needless to point out the analogy of part of this tale to modern folktales like Basile's tale of Pervonto, cited in the last chapter.

Upon the leaf was the sperm of her lover, King Uparicharas. The fish is then caught by fishermen and brought to him. When it is opened the nymph resumes her proper form, and two fish, a male and female, are born of her.[1] The same incident is the substance of a folktale slightly less loathsome in form among the Gipsies of southern Hungary. They say that a rich peasant's wife repulsed Saint Nicholas, who appeared to her as a beggar, and was transformed by him into a little fish and condemned to remain in that state until impregnated by her husband. Her husband threw the fish into the brook; and there it abode a long time, until one day the goodman sat before his door and thought of his wife, and how he could deliver her. So as he sat there he spat, and the spittle fell on a green leaf at his feet. Then a magpie, so often a go-between in these matters, snapped up the leaf in her beak and flew away with it. But as she flew she met another who would have torn the leaf from her; and in their struggle it fell into the water and was devoured by the little fish. Thereupon the heroine returned to her true woman-form and to her husband, for she had been fertilised by his spittle.[2] The Gipsy version appears to be derived from the *Mahâbhârata*, or more probably from the saga whence the poet fashioned the episode in question, and was doubtless brought from the East by the remote forefathers of the tribe.

We might linger long on the supernatural might of Indian

[1] De Gubernatis, ii. *Zool. Myth.*, 331. The ancient nations of the Mediterranean basin believed that the mouth was the ordinary way of impregnation for fishes. Herod. ii. 93; Ælian, *Nat. Anim.*, ix. 63. I have found a similar belief among the peasantry of Gloucestershire, where I am writing, as regards the pea-hen.

[2] Von Wlislocki, *Volksdicht.*, 300.

kings and rishis, as well as the equally chaste and pious saints and reavers of Irish legend; but we must tear ourselves away from their edifying and veracious histories to seek the magical potation and the magical food elsewhere. The most illustrious birth by the former means was that of Zoroaster. A Parsee tradition preserved in the *Selections* of Zâd-sparam, who wrote shortly before the year A.D. 881, ascribes the conception of the great Iranian teacher to his mother's drinking of homa-juice and cow's milk infused with his guardian spirit and glory.[1] The lark, it is said in Roumania, was a maiden born of Gheorghina, the consort of an emperor named Titus. The imperial pair were childless; but an old woman in a dream directed the emperor that his wife should drink of the brook which watered a certain forest. She did so, and gave birth to a lovely daughter, who fell in love with the sun, but was cursed by his mother and changed into a bird.[2] Two divinities worshipped in a country temple in Annam are thus accounted for. A childless man and wife dwelt in the village. One rainy autumnal night the woman put an earthen vessel to receive the drippings of the roof, and she saw a star fall into the vessel. Astounded at the occurrence, she called her husband and told him what had happened. They resolved to say nothing about it, but to drink the water. The woman became pregnant, and after going three years in that state she was at length delivered of three blue eggs. The story-teller considered it necessary at this point to observe that the husband was very much surprised, and carefully kept

[1] v. *Sacred Bks.*, 187. Unfortunately Mr. West, the translator, has not given that part of the *Selections* which relates to Zoroaster's life—only a summary of its contents.

[2] viii. *Rev. Trad. Pop.*, 601, translating S. H. Marian.

the adventure to himself. However, they hatched the eggs, and three serpents crawled out, which followed their father about whithersoever he went. One day he had the ill-luck to cut off the tail of one of them. The wounded serpent forthwith was transformed into a fair youth, who said: "My brothers and I are heavenly genii who committed a sin, and were sent upon earth to succour the kingdom. They will stay, but I reascend to heaven in a tempest which will be a sign of the truth of my words." The two other serpents remained. Sometimes they were changed into men of extraordinary powers; they rendered signal service against China, and ultimately were deified.[1] According to a Finnish song, the lovely maiden Kasaritar was also three years in a state of pregnancy. An ogress had spat upon the waves, and Kasaritar had swallowed the bubble of froth. When at length she brought forth, it was an evil brood, the lizard.[2] The Kotons are a Mongolian tribe. They say that the daughter of one of their khans went with forty of her maidens to a field to gather *djemuis* to eat. Becoming thirsty, the girls all went to the water and drank. In the midst of the water was a drop of blood, which was imbibed by the khan's daughter and caused her to conceive. Her father drove her away; but her son afterwards became khan.[3]

[1] Landes, *Annam.*, 12. There is a Japanese tale of a lady who, having been barren for many years, at length, as the result of much prayer to the gods, bore five hundred eggs. They were thrown into the water in a box, but rescued by a fisherman, incubated in an oven, and all happily hatched. Five hundred heroes were thus produced, whom their mother was afterwards glad to recognise and receive back. This is the legend of Bunsio, the goddess of fruitfulness and riches. Ploss, i. *Weib*, 441, quoting Horst.

[2] Hon. J. Abercromby, in i. *Folklore*, 331.

[3] iv. *F.L. Journ.*, 21.

We are not told here whether the blood was human. The analogy of some other sagas, and of several *märchen*, would lead to the supposition that it must be understood to be a man's blood. Almost any portion of a man may be possessed of fructifying power. One of the *märchen* already passed in review attributes it to a man's heart, and another to the ashes of a burnt skull. A story current among the Serbs is parallel to the latter. The emperor, hunting, finds a skull and causes his horse to step on it. The death's-head cries out: "Why dost thou tread upon me? I am able to injure thee yet." The emperor, hearing this, picks it up, burns it and collects the ashes in a casket. His daughter opens the casket and discovers the ashes. To ascertain what the contents of the box are, she wets her finger, dips it in the ashes and licks it. A boy is the result, who after a variety of adventures becomes the founder of Constantinople. This saga is found also in Ukrainia attached to the name of a national hero, Paliq.[1] As M. Dragomanov, who has brought these Serbian and Ukrainian legends under the notice of Western students, remarks, the tale is found as a *märchen* in the Turkish *Tuti-Nameh*, where it appears under the name of "The story of the skull through which eighty persons lost their lives." There the man who picked up the skull was a merchant; instead of burning it, he ground it to powder; his daughter's son had a reputation for wisdom, and was called in to say why a fish laughed when the vizier's over-modest slave-girl refused to look at it, lest it should be a male. The youth, thus called on, reveals to the vizier the presence in his harem of forty men disguised as women, the lovers of his forty slave-girls; and the slaves and their

[1] M. Dragomanov in *Compte Rendu du Congrès*, 46.

lovers are all put to death, to the number of eighty.[1] I mentioned in the last chapter a Lithuanian story of a hermit who was burned, all but his heart, which was afterwards eaten by a maiden and caused her to give birth to a son. In a Sicilian legend this holy man is identified with Saint Oniria, or Neria. The maiden's son is a new birth of the saint, who proves his sanctity when a child of only five years by convincing his grandfather and his mother's godfather of the salvation of a poor, despised, dead beggar, and the damnation of a wealthy sinner, though borne to his grave upon a costly bier and accompanied by monks with burning tapers, and by revealing the existence of a hoard of gold beneath a dunghill. He is then taken up to heaven, and only appears again to save his grandfather's life when accused of murder.[2]

A Gipsy tradition from Transylvania derives the origin of the Leïla tribe from a king's daughter who was thrust out by her brother and his wicked wife, because the latter envied her that she was the fairer. In her wanderings she was pitied by three Keshalyi, or Fates; and one of them dropped some of her hairs, which the lovely maiden ate and brought into the world a son. From this child sprang the tribe, and he gave his descendants the name of his mother.[3]

[1] ii. *Tuti-Nameh*, 85. With these stories may be compared a Transylvanian Gipsy saga concerning the origin of the Ashani tribe. Ashani, the eponymous mother of the tribe, was the child of a man to whom a supernatural being appeared in a dream riding on the man's own cow, and commanded him to slay the cow, burn its flesh and let his wife eat of the ashes. He was then to sleep with her upon the cowhide. Compliance with this command was followed by Ashani's birth. Von Wlislocki, *Volksdicht.*, 184.

[2] ii. Gonzenbach, 165; Crane, 208.

[3] Von Wlislocki, *Volksdicht.*, 183. See also his *Volksgl. Zig.*, 14. On the Keshalyi's hair, see *post*, p. 155.

But the Supernatural Birth comes about in *märchen* by other means than eating or drinking. It is the same in sagas. The sense of smell has been known to possess this marvellous virtue. The spirit of the pole-star, if we may credit a Chinese tale, visited a girl and gave her a fragrant herb called Hêng-wei, which caused her to become the mother of Chang, who was appointed about the year 25 of our era to the office of Master of Heaven.[1] The Gurû Gorakhnâth, whom we have already found performing wonders, once gave a queen desirous of offspring two flowers. Two sons were born to her; but because she had deceived him she was doomed to die at their birth.[2] According to a poem written in Old French by a priest at Valenciennes about the middle of the thirteenth century, Abraham planted in his garden the Tree of Knowledge, flung by God out of Paradise after the Fall. His daughter became pregnant by the scent of a blossom broken off from it, and bore Phanuel, from whom the Virgin Mary descended.[3]

Or it is enough for the magical article to be placed in the predestined maiden's bosom. When from the blood of the mutilated Agdestis a pomegranate-tree sprang up, Nana the nymph gathered and laid in her bosom some of the fruit wherewith it was laden, and from hence, in classical belief, Attis was born.[4] In a Latin myth, Cæculus, the son of Vulcan and Præneste, was conceived by means of a spark

[1] Dennys, 135, citing the *China Review*.

[2] i. *Leg. Panjâb*, 139, 142.

[3] Liebrecht in a note to *Gerv. Tilb.*, 69. Jonas Hanway refers to a Mohammedan belief that the Virgin Mary conceived Our Lord by the smell of a rose. i. Hanway, 179. I have not been successful in tracing his authority.

[4] Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, v. 5; Pausanias, vii. 17.

which leaped into his mother's bosom. The forty companions of the khan's daughter, in the Koton legend already cited, were quickened by laying stones on their bosoms; and in this way from them multiplied the Sarabash tribes of the Altai mountains. On the western continent, one of the great Aztec deities, Huitzilopochtli, the brother and rival of Quetzalcoatl, had a similar origin. Coatlicue, the Serpent-skirted, was already the mother of many children. She dwelt on the mountain of the Snake, near the city of Tulla, and, being very devout, she occupied herself in sweeping and cleansing the sacred places of the mountain. One day, while engaged in these duties, a little ball of feathers floated down to her through the air. She caught it and hid it in her bosom; nor was it long before she found herself pregnant. Thereupon her children conspired to put her to death; but Huitzilopochtli, issuing from her womb all armed, like Pallas from the head of Zeus, speedily destroyed his brethren and sister and enriched his mother with their spoils.[1]

The Dorahs of New Guinea trace their parentage to a solitary old man, who caught the Morning Star in the act of stealing his palm-wine. As ransom he obtained from the felon a magical wand. This wand possessed the property of making a virgin a mother, by simply touching her bosom. The old man put its virtue to proof at once upon the loveliest girl of his island-home. She gave birth to a son

[1] iii. Bancroft, 296, quoting Torquemada; Müller, *Amer. Urrel.*, 601. The account given by Dr. Brinton makes Coatlicue a virgin and the ball of feathers merely "some white plumes." *Amer. Hero-Myths*, 77. It does not appear on what authority this account rests. I feel sure, however, that it has not been given without reason. The round shield borne by the god in his usual representations was studded with white pellets of feathers. Zelia Nuttall, in v. *Internat. Archiv.*, 39.

called Konori, who proved his miraculous descent, as these children alone know how to do, by pointing out his father.[1] This calls to mind a well-known passage of the *Mabinogion* of which Lady Charlotte Guest's modesty made nonsense. I venture to quote her charming English, with the needful correction. Math, the son of Mathonwy, is taking counsel with Gwydion and Gilvaethwy, the sons of Don, what maiden he shall seek for a wife. "'Lord,' said Gwydion, the son of Don, 'it is easy to give thee counsel; seek Arianrod, the daughter of Don, thy niece, thy sister's daughter.' And they brought her unto him, and the maiden came in. 'Ha, damsel,' said he, 'art thou *a* maiden?' 'I know not, lord, other than that I am.' Then he took up his magic wand and bent it. 'Step over this,' said he, 'and I shall know if thou art *a* maiden.' Then stepped she over the magic wand, and there appeared forthwith a fine chubby yellow-haired boy. And thereupon some small form was seen; but before any one could get a second glimpse of it Gwydion had taken it and flung a scarf of velvet around it and hidden it. Now the place where he hid it was the bottom of a chest at the foot of his bed." The yellow-haired boy was baptized by the name of Dylan. "As Gwydion lay one morning on his bed awake, he heard a cry in the chest at his feet; and though it was not loud, it was such that he could hear it. Then he arose in haste, and opened the chest: and when he opened it, he beheld an infant boy stretching out his arms from the folds of the scarf, and casting it aside. And he took up the boy in his arms, and carried him to a place where he knew there was a woman that could nurse him. And he agreed with the woman that she should take charge of the boy. And that

[1] Featherman, *Papuo-Mel.*, 43.

year he was nursed. And at the end of the year he seemed by his size as though he were two years old. And the second year he was a big child and able to go to the Court by himself." This second boy was afterwards named Llew Llaw Gyffes, and the rest of the story deals with his adventures.[1] It is clear that the wand is credited with phallic power. A saga of the Warraus of British Guiana is unambiguous in the ascription of such power to the stump of a tree. This stump was half-submerged in a pool where two Indian women were bathing, when one of them touched it and it promptly made her its wife. To her brothers' indignation, a child was born; and after it died, a second interview with the stump resulted in a second child. This child, a boy, was slain by his mother's brothers, who cut his body into small pieces. But from the grave arose a man stronger and fiercer than any Warrau. He was the first Carib; and hence there has always been enmity between the Caribs and the Warraus.[2]

We have found several cases, both of *märchen* and of sagas, where the masculine saliva and other secretions, if swallowed, produced pregnancy. The same consequence is believed to result from the spittle's being received into the woman's hand. The twin divinities, Hun Ahpu and

[1] *Mabinogion*, 421; i. *Y Llyvyr Coch*, 68. Note the singular resemblance of the production of Llew Llaw Gyffes to that of the children in the Zulu and Kaffir tales mentioned on p. 98. Compare also the Thlinkit cosmogonic saga of the child born from a cockle-shell. *Rep. Nat. Mus.* (1888), 378.

[2] Im Thurn, 378. Cf. the tradition of the first khan of the Diurbiuts, a Mongolian tribe. It was revealed to ten men in a dream that of the tree Urun and the bird of the same name was born a divine son; he became the khan: iv. *F.L. Journ.*, 20. See also a curious tale from New Guinea on the origin of death: xix. *Journ. Anthrop. Inst.*, 465.

Xbalanque, honoured by the Quiché of Central America, were thus begotten. Hunhun Ahpu and Vukub Hun Ahpu having been put to death by the two kings of Xibalba, a mysterious subterranean realm, the head of the former was placed between the withered branches of a calabash-tree of the kind afterwards called Hunhun Ahpu's head; and immediately the tree became laden with fruit; the head turned into a calabash, and was indistinguishable from the rest. Thereupon the kings tabooed the tree as sacred. Xquiq, the daughter of a prince named Cuchumaquiq, broke the taboo. As she approached to pluck the fruit, Hunhun Ahpu's head spat into her hand, and she thereby conceived. Her father, perceiving her condition, condemned her to death; but she persuaded the executioners to deceive him, and gave birth in due time to twins of extraordinary power, who avenged themselves on the rulers of Xibalba after the manner of Medea upon Pelias.[1]

A similar incident is told in the Far East by the people of Annam concerning an historical personage who was put to death in the year 1443 of our era. He was, according to one account, the parent of the king's wife. According to another account, this lady was a serpent who had taken the form of a young girl and been adopted by the hero of the legend, and given by him in marriage to the king. At all events, she slew the king by biting off his tongue; and she, with her father (or guardian) and all his family, was put to death. Her father was buried alive with one of his soldiers. The soldier's wife succeeded in penetrating the grave, but only to find her husband already dead. His chief, however, was still living, and, protesting his innocence, he spat in

[1] *Popol Vuh*, 89.

the woman's hand, wherefrom she became pregnant and bore a son who founded a new dynasty.[1]

Conception has taken place in legend not only by the hand but by the foot, as in some of the *märchen* reviewed in the preceding chapter. The *Shih King* relates of Hâu-*k*i, the ancestor of the kings of *K*âu, that *K*iang Yüan, his mother, was childless until she trod on a toe-print made by God. The instant she did so she felt moved; she conceived, and at length gave birth to a son.[2]

Impregnation, however, by an unusual part of the body is often attended by the inconvenience of birth by other than the natural exit. In the Sanskrit books kings are mentioned as born from hand, or right arm, or from the thigh or the top of the head, just as Bacchus was born from the thigh, and Athene from the head, of Zeus. The divine Parvati herself was conceived by a look and spit forth upon the world. The old French poem already referred to represents Saint Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, as born from her father Phanuel's thigh, which he touched with a knife after cutting an apple, and thus caused it to conceive.[3] Buddha, in the form of a white elephant,

[1] Landes, *Annam.*, 63. See also a curious myth of the aborigines of Hayti, one of the few descended to us, which represents a male personage as becoming pregnant by the spittle of another. Having been cut open, he brought forth a woman, by means of whom the island was subsequently peopled. Liebrecht, in a note to *Gerv. Tilb.*, 71, quoting indirectly Peter Martyr.

[2] iii. *Sacred Bks.*, 396; De Charencey, *Le Fils*, 9.

[3] Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 1449. In a modern Indian *märchen* from Salsette the heroine is born in an extraordinary manner. A woman pours into a mendicant's hands some rice boiling hot from the caldron, raising a big blister on his thumb. When his wife breaks the blister a little girl comes out. Miss Cox, *Cinderella*, 260, abstracting a story in xx. *Indian Antiquary*, 142.

entered his mother's right side, and from her right side he was born.[1] Cases like these are frequent in cosmogonic myths which we need not discuss.

But, before we leave the subject of impregnation by an unusual part of the body, it is not unimportant to observe that, during the Middle Ages, a similar idea was current respecting the conception of Jesus Christ. Sometimes painters represented the Holy Ghost as entering his mother at her ear in the shape of a dove. In the Church of the Magdalen at Aix, in Provence, is a picture of the Annunciation attributed to Albert Dürer, wherein waves of glory descend from God the Father, and in the midst of them a microscopic babe floats down upon the Virgin. During the fifteenth century the opinion seems to have been common that Our Lord entered already completely formed into the Virgin's womb—an opinion which orthodox theologians, in their perfect acquaintance with the divine arrangements, were able summarily to pronounce heretical. But a remarkable parallel to the story of Buddha's conception is presented by a picture of Fra Filippo Lippi, painted for Cosmo de' Medici and now in the National Gallery. The Virgin is seated in a chair with her Book of Hours in her hand, and the angel Gabriel bows before her. Above is a right hand surrounded with clouds. A dove, cast from the hand amid circling floods of glory, is making for the Virgin's navel, which it is about to enter; while she, bending forward, curiously surveys it. The picture is well worth

[1] xix. *Sacred Bks.*, 2; Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, 183. The father and the mother of Parákrama I., the restorer of the native kingdom of Ceylon, dreamed the same night that a beautiful elephant entered her chamber; and this was interpreted to foretell the birth of a hero. *Buddhism Primitive and Present in Magadha and in Ceylon*, by Reginald Stephen Copleston (London, 1892), 378.

studying, not merely for its exquisite grace, colouring and finish, as one of the masterpieces of Tuscan art in the earlier half of the fifteenth century, but also as an exposition of the ideas which were prevalent at that time under the sanction of the Church, and for the purpose of comparing them with Buddhist legends and other stories of supernatural birth, such as we are now considering. Mohammedan tradition ascribes the miraculous conception by the Virgin to Gabriel's having opened the bosom of her shift and breathed upon her womb.[1] Parallel with this is a legend concerning Quetzalcoatl. Tradition varied much as to his life. This probably means that his worship and story were ancient and widespread among folk of the Mexican stock. One version, as we know, records his birth from a precious stone swallowed by his mother Chimalma. In a variant the Lord of Existence, Tonacatecutli, appears to Chimalma and her two sisters. The sisters were both struck dead by fright; but he breathed upon Chimalma, and by his breath quickened life within her, so that she bore Quetzalcoatl. Her son cost her her life. Having thus perished on earth, she was translated to heaven, like the Virgin Mary in the traditions of the Church, and was thenceforward honoured under the name of Chalchihuitzli, the Precious Stone of Sacrifice.[2] But there is a world of difference between this apotheosis and that of the Virgin Mary. The latter is true, being guaranteed by the authority of the Church; while the former rested only on the testimony of heathen priests and peoples, deceived of course by the Tempter of Mankind.

[1] Sale, *Koran*, note on ch. xxix., citing Arab authors.

[2] Brinton, *Amer. Hero-Myths*, 90; iii. Bancroft, 271; both citing the Mexican Codex in the Vatican and the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis*.

It will be remembered that Mughain, before she bore Aedh Sláine, did more than drink of the consecrated water: she washed in it. Stories of conception by bathing have been seriously believed alike in the Old and New Worlds. A Zulu saga represents a king's daughters as bathing in a pool in the river. The youngest, a mere child, comes out with breasts swollen as large as a woman's. By the advice of the council of old men she is driven away. After wandering from place to place she gives birth to a boy who grows up a wise doctor. From what is said of his beneficent deeds it has been conjectured that we have here a corrupted account of Our Lord's birth, derived possibly from the Portuguese.[1] If this be so (which is quite uncertain) it is important to note that the story has coalesced with native tradition as completely as the fiftieth rune of the *Kalevala* with the adventures of Väinämöinen. The main incident was apparently in harmony with native thought, and therefore easily attracted to itself the details of native life and discarded its own proper details, which would be incomprehensible. In the Hindu mythology Parvati, the spouse of Siva, justified her own irregular entrance upon the world by conception through bathing, without intercourse, and thus brought forth Ganesa.[2] A story is told, in a work attributed to Plutarch, of Bacchus in the shape of the river Tigris carrying away the nymph Alphesiboea and begetting on her a son, Medus. If Aristonymus, who seems to have been originally responsible for it, was reporting a genuine tradition, it must, so far as we can penetrate its Greek disguise, have referred to a similar adventure on the part of Alphesiboea. Medus was the

[1] Callaway, *Tales*, 335.
[2] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 436.

eponym of the Medes.[1] Some of the Algonkins of North America traced the lineage of mankind from two young squaws who, swimming in the sea, were impregnated by the foam and produced a boy and girl.[2] So the black Kirghiz pretended to have for their great foremother a princess who became pregnant by bathing in a foam-covered lake.[3]

The ancient Persians held a curious belief anent Saoshyant, the future hero who was to come from the region of the dawn to free the world from death and corruption before the Resurrection. Three drops of the seed of Zoroaster, we are told in the sacred books, fell from him. What was bright and strong in it has been preserved by the agency of angels. At the appointed time a maid, bathing in the lake Kâsava, will come in contact with it, and will conceive by it and bring forth the Saviour. Indeed, the orthodox view appears to be that she will triple the miracle, by thrice conceiving in this way and bringing forth three sons, of whom the two elder will be forerunners of the third. He will come with authority to reduce all peoples under the yoke of the true religion ; and the general Resurrection will follow his conquest of the world.[4] The Middle Ages, which believed that Antichrist, in rivalry with Christ, would declare himself born of a virgin,[5] would have seen nothing impossible in the kind of birth foretold for Saoshyant. Averrhoes, in fact, put forward as having actually occurred a case of a woman who became pregnant

[1] Plutarch, *Names of Rivers and Mountains*, xxiv.

[2] Featherman, *Aoneo-Mar.*, 80.

[3] De Charencey, *Le Fils*, 16.

[4] iv. *Sacred Bks.*, lxxix. ; v. 143 note, 144 ; xxiii. 195, 226, 307 ; De Charencey, *Traditions*, 31, quoting Tavernier ; Rev. Dr. Mills, in *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1894, 51.

[5] *Gerv. Tilb.* (Decision i. c. 17), 6, 68.

in a bath, by attracting the semen of a man bathing near. The admirable common sense of Sir Thomas Browne rejected this, with many more absurdities current in his day.[1] But he failed to convince those who stood by tradition. A singular little book, refuting "Doctor Brown's *Vulgar Errors*, the Lord Bacon's *Natural History* and Doctor Harvey's Book *De Generatione*, Comenius and Others," was published in the year 1652. The writer, conscious no doubt of powers commensurate to the task he had undertaken, too modestly concealed his name, and has left the world baffled at the mystery of his identity. Admitting Averrhoes' story to be a strange one, he reproves Sir Thomas Browne's incredulity by saying: "Hee that denyeth a matter of fact, must bring good witnesses to the contrary, or else shew the impossibility of the fact." This, he declares, had not been done. Then, after arguing in favour of the "fact," he goes on to uphold the belief in Incubi, "for to deny this, saith Augustine, doth argue impudence;" and moreover it is "to accuse the ancient Doctors of the Church and the Ecclesiastick Histories of falshood," and "to contradict the common consent of all Nations, and experience."[2] This is crushing, though assuredly an appeal to "the ancient Doctors of the Church" has always been successful in putting to shame the wisdom of the world; and Bacon, Sir Thomas Browne and the rest will for ever lie under the stigma of impudence, impiety and egregious folly.

Not only water but wind has been deemed sufficient to cause the birth of gods and heroes. The examples most

[1] Browne, *Vulgar Errors* (l. vii. c. 16), 371.

[2] *Arcana Microcosmi: or, The hid Secrets of Man's Body discovered*, etc. By A. R. (London, 1652), 132.

familiar to us are those of Hera, who conceived Hephaistos without male concurrence by simply inhaling the wind, and of the maiden (in Longfellow's poem, called Wenonah) who was quickened by the west wind and bore Michabo, the Algonkin hero better known as Hiawatha.[1] To these we may add the blind Loujatar, source of all evils, ugliest and most hateful of Mana's daughters, fructified by the east wind and bearing at a birth nine sons—nine several diseases to decimate mankind. Nor was she the first in the Finnish mythology to conceive in this manner, for Väinämöinen himself was the son of the virgin Ilmatar, who in the beginning, while as yet there was neither earth nor sun, moon nor stars, lay down upon the waters and was fecundated by the east wind. She bore her child for seven hundred years before she could bring him to the birth.[2]

Montezuma, the culture-hero of the Pueblos of New Mexico, was the son of a maiden of exquisite beauty, but fastidious and coy. When the drought fell on her people she opened her granaries and fed them out of her abundance. "At last, with rain, fertility returned to the earth; and on the chaste Artemis of the Pueblos its touch fell too. She bore a son to the thick summer shower, and that son was Montezuma."[3] The Chinese and the Tartars appear

[1] Brinton, *Amer. Hero-Myths*, 47, citing Schoolcraft, who must, however, be generally accepted with caution.

[2] *Kalevala*, runes xlv. and i. I have already referred to another legend of the fertilisation of Loujatar, p. 114, note. The Magic Songs of the Finns are full of these stories. See Hon. J. Abercromby, in iv. *Folklore*, 35, 37, 47. The Magyars tell of a wind-begotten supernatural steed. Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Mag.*, 10. Sir Walter Scott refers somewhere to a border ballad of a maiden impregnated by the night-wind; but I have mislaid the reference.

[3] iii. Bancroft, 175, note. Cf. Dr. A. W. Bell, in i. *Journ. Ethnol.*

able as usual to match all these traditions of parthenogenesis. The historian Ma-twan-lin has recorded that the king of the So-li, or northern barbarians, having been absent on a journey, found one of his concubines pregnant at his return. He would have put her to death, had she not asserted that a vapour about the size of an egg descended on her from the sky and caused her interesting condition. He shut her up, however, and she bore a son, who was thrown by the king's orders into the pigsty. The pigs warmed the babe with their breath. He was thrown into a stable, and the horses did the same, reminding us of the birth of Marjatta's child. The king then was persuaded of his slave-girl's truth. He brought up the boy; but he feared him as he grew and became a skilful archer, and sought therefore to destroy him. The youth fled southward until he reached a certain river. There was no way over; so he struck the water with his bow, and the fishes and turtles, gathering together, formed a compact mass, that served as a bridge for the hero. He crossed dryshod, and, reaching a land to the north of Corea, founded there the nation and kingdom of the Fou-yu.[1]

The following seems a Corean variant of this legend. A king held captive in his palace a daughter of the river Ho. She was fertilised by the rays of the sun and laid an

Soc., *N.S.*, 250, where "a dewdrop from the Great Spirit" is said to have fallen upon the maiden's bosom, entered her blood and caused her to conceive. This comes to the same thing; but Bancroft's version seems more primitive.

[1] De Charencey, *Traditions*, 34, citing the Marquis d'Hervey-Saint-Denis. According to an Irish tradition, related in America by a woman from Roscommon, the ass and cow are accounted sacred, because these animals breathed upon the infant Jesus in the manger, and thus kept him warm. vi. *Journ. Amer. F.L.*, 264.

enormous egg, which the king caused to be thrown successively to the swine and to the dogs, to the horses and to the cattle. None of these would touch it; and it was flung out into the desert. There the birds of the air flocked to it and covered it with their wings. The king then tried to break it, but failed; and it was restored to the captive maiden. She wrapped it up and warmed it for some time, until it burst and a boy came forth. The people became attached to him; but the king's ill-will was excited, and, warned by his mother, the youth deemed it prudent to flee. Announcing himself as the sun's son and the grandson of the river Ho, he was assisted to cross that river by the turtles and fishes as above; and he at length arrived at the town of Ke-ching-ko, which he called Kao-kin-li, and became the founder of the kingdom of that name.[1] As late as the latter years of the sixteenth century, Hideyoshi, the Taiko of Japan, was not too civilised to make similar pretensions. They were, however, veiled, after the manner of the Irish saints we have already mentioned, as a vision. He told the ambassador of the king of Corea: "I am the only remaining scion of a humble stock; but my mother once had a dream in which she saw the sun enter her bosom; after which she gave birth to me. There was then a soothsayer, who said, 'Wherever the sun shines, there will be no place which shall not be subject to him. It may not be doubted that one day his power will overspread the empire.'"[2] A Jesuit father who visited Siam in the seventeenth century reports concerning Sommonocodon, the Siamese deity, that he was born of a virgin who had retired to the depths of a certain forest, there to live in holiness and austerity pending the

[1] De Charencey, *Traditions*, 35.

[2] i. Reed, 201.

advent of God, then speedily expected. One day while she prayed she conceived by the prolific rays of the sun. The innocent maiden, ashamed to find herself with child, flew to a solitary desert, in order to hide herself from the eyes of mankind. Upon the banks of a lake, and without any sense of pain, she was miraculously delivered of the most beautiful babe in the world; but having no milk wherewith to suckle him, and being unable to bear the thought of seeing him die, she jumped into the water, where she set him upon the bud of a flower, which blew of itself for his more commodious reception, and afterwards enclosed him as in a cradle.[1] With these instances of sun-pregnancy may be compared the Chinese tale of the Emperor Yao's mother, who was rendered fruitful by the splendour of a star that flashed upon her during a dream.[2]

The Kirghiz Tartar tradition of the birth of the celebrated Genghis Khan is perhaps a refinement of some such legend as these, due to change of religion or other civilising influence. As it has more than one resemblance to that of Danae I venture to give some of the details. A khan named Altyn Bel had an only son. At length his wife became pregnant a second time, and bore a daughter so beautiful that the khan commanded that no man was to see her; and to conceal her from all human eyes she must be brought up hidden beneath the ground. Wherefore her mother gave her in charge to an old woman, who nourished her in the dark. The babe grew to maidenhood; and one

[1] *Second Voyage du Père Tachard*, 247. Sommonocodon is obviously Buddha. Both this story and one previously given (on p. 114) have been filtered through the minds of Jesuit fathers anxious to discover identifications with Christian teaching.

[2] De Charencey, *Le Fils*, 13.

day she asked her nurse: "Whither dost thou go from time to time?" The nurse told her in reply that there was a bright world where her father and mother and all sorts of people dwelt; and thither she herself went. The maiden prayed to be shown this bright world; and under promise to tell no one of it the woman took her secretly out into the open air. As soon as the maiden came forth and looked upon the world she staggered and fainted; for at the same moment God's eye fell upon her, and at His command she became pregnant. When this was known to the khan he ordered her to be put to death; but, being dissuaded from so extreme a course, he allowed his wife to lock the maiden in a golden chest, together with some food, and to fling the chest into the sea, first binding the key on the outside. Two heroes, hunting, see the chest on the water. Agreeing between themselves that the one should take the chest and the other its contents, whatever they were, they capture and drag it ashore. On opening it they find the girl, who tells them her tale, and after her babe's birth weds one of them. Her son is Genghis. He grew up renowned among the youth for his uprightness and excellence; and when the ruler of the town died childless the people chose Genghis in his place, and swore obedience to him. So Genghis ruled the folk in justice and peace; and theft and lying vanished from among them. But his mother had borne to his stepfather three sons, who envied him and said: "This is a fatherless child; we cannot suffer him as ruler. We have a father; make one of us prince." When Genghis knew it, he resolved to flee, lest they should put him to death. He told his mother he would go to the source of the waters whereon she had come floating thither; to the place where his father dwelt he

would go, and live. "O mother, I will let thee know whether I am alive or dead. I will throw feathers into the water: when you see the feathers floating by, you will know I am well; if the feathers do not float by, I shall be dead." Then he went upwards along the stream. (It was called the sea just now; but the Tartars are inlanders.) He shot game. Out of the fells of the beasts he made a house; the feathers of the birds floated down to his mother, and she knew that he lived. The people made one of his half-brothers prince. But his rule was corrupt; liars and thieves and all sorts of criminals abounded, and he could not protect his people. Wherefore they resolved to depose him and to seek out Genghis again; and five-and-twenty of their noblest went to find him. They came to the place where he dwelt, and hid themselves, lest he should flee them again. He was absent. When he returned they waited until he had eaten and lain down to rest. Four-and-twenty men then seized him, bowing the head; but he flung them all aside. They spake: "O Prince and Lord, we are thy servants and come to thee as suppliants. Since thou hast left us our yourt has broken up. Come back and take again thy seat as ruler." He yielded and went back with them. On their return a council was held, and it was determined to submit the claims of Genghis and his three brothers to their mother, who should choose the prince from among them. The mother said to her sons: "You are all my children; do not quarrel, I will decide the affair. Hang all your bows upon this sunbeam: whose bow soever this beam bears, let him be ruler." All four brought their bows and hung them on the sunbeam. Only Genghis' bow remained hanging; the bows of the other three brothers fell to the

ground. And the woman said to all the folk: "Behold! He became my child by God's decree; by God's decree too the sunbeam bears his bow: make him your prince. If these three offer him violence, put them to death. You, O folk, are many: let no harm be done to him." And again he ruled in peace and justice. He took a noble wife, who bore him three sons and a daughter. So renowned was he that a messenger came from the ruler of the kingdom of Rome and prayed for one of his children to make him ruler of Rome; and he gave one of his sons. From Crim-Tartary came another to ask for another son as ruler; and he gave him his second son. From the Khalif's people came another on the same errand; and he gave him the third son. Then came an embassy from the Russians and asked for a child. As he had no more sons, he gave the Russians his daughter; and they led her forth to make her their ruler. When he died, as he had sent all his children away to rule other lands, his brothers became forefathers of the evil sultans of his own people.[1]

Phallic power is not infrequently exercised in the legends of the Far East by the glances of divine, or quasi-divine, beings. After the latest cyclic cataclysm, which preceded by about eighteen thousand years the coming of Xacca, as the inhabitants of Laos call Buddha, a genius descended from the highest of the sixteen worlds to repeople the earth. With his scimitar he cut asunder a flower he beheld swimming on the water. From the stem a beautiful maiden sprang, and he grew enamoured of her. But such was her bashfulness that she refused to listen to his suit. Accordingly he placed himself at a certain distance from her, but directly opposite, where he could gaze upon her;

[1] iii. Radloff, 82.

and with the ardour of his gaze she became a mother without ceasing to be a maiden. For the numerous issue that he had in this way begotten he furnished the earth with mountains and valleys, fruit-trees and animals fitted for the service of mankind, metals and precious stones and every other convenience.[1] The Japanese pretend that the ancestors of the present race which possesses their empire were heroes or demi-gods, who in turn derived their origin from celestial spirits, of whom seven ruled the empire. The first three of these spirits had no wives, and three of the others impregnated their wives merely by their looks.[2] The Marquesan islanders report that Hina, the daughter of the god Taaroa, bore to him a daughter named Apouvaru, who also became wife to her father. Taaroa and Apouvaru looked steadfastly at one another, with the result that Apouvaru became a mother. She brought into the world a son; and the visual intercourse being repeated she brought forth a second son. After repeating it again she brought forth a daughter. This seems to have satisfied these divine beings, for no further experiments are reported.[3] Taaroa, however, according to the Leeward islanders, begot another son by shaking the shadow of a bread-fruit leaf over his daughter-wife, Hina.[4] At Rome the birth of Servius Tullius was by tradition imputed to a look. His mother Ocrisia was a slave of Tanaquil, the wife of Tarquinius Priscus. The likeness of a phallos

[1] De Charencey, *Traditions*, 38, quoting Father Giov. Phil. Marini; Southey, iv. *Commonplace Bk.*, 41, quoting Picart.

[2] De Charencey, *Traditions*, 36.

[3] Ellis, i. *Polyn. Res.*, 262. Cf. the account of creation in the Windward Isles, *ibid.*, 324.

[4] *Ibid.*, 326.

appeared on the hearth; and she, who was sitting before it, arose pregnant of the future king. The household Lar was deemed his father, in confirmation of which a lambent flame was seen about the child's head as he lay asleep.[1]

We have found a Zulu *märchen* narrating the birth of a child from a clot of blood placed in a pot and covered down. To similar effect is the Melanesian tradition of Deitari, from Aurora Island. His father Tari went into his garden to work, when he felt something cut him. He put the blood into a bamboo vessel, returned to his house and set it down by the hearth. After many days his wife, going to cook food for him, was surprised to find food already cooked by somebody unknown. When this had recurred several times, the woman told her husband, and he bade her watch. Then she saw Deitari (Tari's blood) creep out of the bamboo vessel. He was exceeding fair to look upon; and she hid him, and asked her husband what he had put in that bamboo vessel. Tari remembered about his blood, and said: "My blood was in that bamboo." His wife replied: "I saw him come forth out of that bamboo that you had put there." And she brought him forth, and her husband rejoiced to see him.[2] The Mexicans attributed the origin of the present race of mankind to a bone of one of the previous races who had perished in a cataclysm. The goddess Omecihuatl, having had many children in heaven, was at length delivered of

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, xxxvi. 70; Ovid (*Fasti*, vi. 629) and Arnobius (*Adv. Gen.*, v. 18) regard Ocrisia as not quite so innocent. According to the former, Vulcan it was who was the father. Livy (i. 39) rationalises the tale.

[2] Codrington, 406.

a knife of flint. This knife was flung by her elder children to the earth, and where it fell there sprang up sixteen hundred heroes from the ground. By the goddess' direction, one of these heroes, Xolotl, was sent to Hell to fetch a bone of one of the men who had died. The god of Hell, having given it, repented and pursued the messenger, who fortunately escaped, but in his haste stumbled and broke the bone. He gathered up the pieces and brought them to his brethren, who put them into a vessel and sprinkled them with blood drawn from their own bodies. At the end of four days a boy was formed from the bone, and at the end of three more a girl, who became the ancestors of all nations.[1]

With these cases we may for the present close our long and monotonous list of Supernatural Births. If anybody shall complain that it is not exhaustive, he must be congratulated on his appetite for these marvellous occurrences. Practically the subject is inexhaustible. I have not attempted to deal with every story, nor with every kind of story. I have limited myself so far as possible to narratives analogous to those in the different forms of the Perseus myth, and to little more than specimens of them. In treating of sagas we have been able to show a range extended beyond that of *märchen*. The Supernatural Birth, in the forms in which we have studied it, is known throughout Europe, Asia, and America, and in large groups of the Pacific Islands. It is repeated again and again in the Chinese and other Mongolian traditions. We have found it among the Zulus in South Africa; and although there may be some doubt as to the native character of a portion of the story, there

[1] Southey, iv. *Commonplace Bk.*, 142; Featherman, *Chiapo-Mar.*, 136.

can be none as to the mode of impregnation. When we know more about the legends and beliefs of the natives of the interior, we shall probably find the myth as thoroughly at home there as it is in an Italian nursery-tale.[1]

[1] While these sheets were passing through the press, Comte H. de Charencey, of whose studies I have availed myself in the foregoing pages, republished the substance of his articles on the Virgin's Son, with additions, in a work entitled *Les Folklore dans les deux mondes* (Paris, Klincksieck, 1894). He seeks there to show that the New World borrowed many of its legends from the Old, and among them that of the Supernatural Birth. If I understand him aright, he follows M. Angrand in attributing Mexican civilisation to an Asiatic origin, and declares that while traditions of a powerful hero born without a father are found among the tribes whose culture was drawn from this source, they are not found among other peoples, like the Mayas and the Peruvians, whose civilisation is to be ascribed to an easterly provenience. It is always dangerous to assert a negative. We have already seen (*ante*, p. 118) that the Peruvians had a tradition of the Supernatural Birth, although the offspring did not turn out a hero. But Hiawatha was a hero exactly of the kind referred to; and the foremother of the Bakaïrí of Central Brazil gave birth to the twin culture-heroes and parents of the race from swallowing two finger-bones. Von den Steinen, 373. The myth is far too widely spread, and far too deeply rooted in the savage beliefs of both hemispheres, to be simply accounted for by borrowing.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUPERNATURAL BIRTH IN PRACTICAL SUPERSTITIONS.

THE result of the inquiries of the last two chapters has been to show that the incident of the Supernatural Birth, in forms identical with, or at least analogous to, those of the Perseus cycle, is found, broadly speaking, over the whole world,—and that, not merely as a tale whereto no serious belief is attached, but, even more widely, as a saga, or record of what are deemed to have been actual events. But if, amid all differences of race and culture, birth has thus been held to have been caused on various occasions in these marvellous ways, it is natural to ask whether it has also been thought possible still to make effectual use of such means to produce pregnancy in barren women. The answer is, that it has been, and still is, thought possible. In other words, the traditions of past miracles are organically connected in the popular mind with practices expressly calculated to produce repetitions of those miracles. It will be observed, however, that parthenogenesis is often spoken of in the stories; whereas, for the most part, the object of the practices I am about to describe is to promote conception by women who are in the habit of having sexual intercourse. The distinction is

often immaterial. In the stage of civilisation wherein the stories are told and the practices obtain, medicine and surgery are not as yet separated from magic. We cannot therefore, speak positively as to the meaning and intention of all. But it is clear that a large number of the practices, as well as of the stories, imply, if we are not told in so many words, that the real origin of the child afterwards born is not the semen received in the act of coition, but the drug, or the magical potency of the incantation.

In discussing the practices I shall ask the reader's pardon if I do not limit myself to such as are precisely analogous to the means found in the stories, nor even to such as are explicable by reasons already known to be accepted in barbaric life. I desire, beyond these, to call the attention of scholars to some of the problems yet to be solved. We have learned to understand much that used to be mysterious in the ways and the thoughts of savages. But much remains unknown or misunderstood. And even if a solitary student cannot explain, he may render some small service to science in inquiring into, that which needs explanation.

The favourite method of supernatural impregnation in stories is perhaps by eating some fruit or herb. Nor is this method by any means neglected in practice. The maxim attributed to the Druids leaps to the mind, namely, that powder of mistletoe makes women fruitful. As held by the Druids this is doubtless to be understood literally, just as among the ancient Medes, Persians and Bactrians the juice of the sacred Soma was prescribed to procure for unproductive women fair children and a pure succession.[1] Thus the birth of Zoroaster himself was, as we have seen, believed

[1] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 431, citing Duncker.

to have been caused. Among the rules for the performance of the Vedic domestic ceremonies, given in the *Grihya-Sûtras*, the householder who does not study the *Upanishad* treating of the rules for securing conception, the male gender of the child, and so forth, is directed in the third month of his wife's pregnancy to give her, after she has fasted, in curds from a cow which has a calf of the same colour as the dam, two beans and a barleycorn for each handful of curds. Then he is to ask her: "What dost thou drink?" To which she is to reply: "Generation of a male child." When the curds and the question and response have been thrice repeated, he is to insert into her right nostril the sap of a herb which is not withered.[1] One can hardly doubt that this is a ceremonial to procure offspring, though not performed, according to the rubric, until after conception has taken place. In the book of medical receipts deemed to be derived from the ancient Physicians of Myddfai, printed in the year 1861 from a Welsh manuscript bearing date in 1801, we find it stated that a decoction of mistletoe causes fruitfulness of body and the getting of children.[2] Here the magical plant seems to have faded into one of merely natural efficacy. On the other hand, something more than the light of common day still glorifies the rosemary. Among other things we are told that to carry a piece of this plant is to keep every evil spirit at a distance, and that rosemary has all the virtues of the stone called jet. It was because it was obnoxious to evil spirits that it was used at funerals. But it was not only used at

[1] xxix. *Sacred Books*, 180; cf. 395.

[2] *Meddygon Myddfai*, 269. Concerning this work see my article on "Old Welsh Folk-Medicine" in ix. *Y Cymmrodor*, 227. Both MSS. comprised in the book badly want careful reprinting and proper editing.

funerals. There is a story of a widower who wished to be married again on the day of his former wife's funeral, because the rosemary employed at the funeral could be used for the wedding also. For its use at weddings there was an additional reason, which is given in the Welsh manuscript; to wit, one of its remarkable powers was that "it was sovran against barrenness."[1] Hindu women eat little balls of rice with intent to obtain children. A woman who wishes for a child, especially a son, observes the fourth lunar day of every dark fortnight as a fast, and breaks her fast only after seeing the moon, generally before nine or ten o'clock in the evening. A dish of twenty-one balls of rice having been prepared, in one of which is put some salt, it is then placed before her; and if she first put her hand on the ball containing salt, she will be blessed with a son. In this case no more is eaten; otherwise she goes on until she takes the salted ball.[2] At the festival of Ráhu, the tribal god of the Dosádhs of Behar and Chota Nagpur, the priest distributes to the crowd tulsi-leaves which heal diseases else incurable, and flowers which have the virtue of causing barren women to conceive;[3] but whether they are to be eaten or only smelt does not appear. The same omission occurs in a report by Mr. Leland that a Tuscan woman who desires offspring goes to a priest, gets a blessed apple

[1] *Ibid.*, 262, 263; Friend, 115, 124, 581. Rosemary with grains of mastic was given by physicians in the seventeenth century to cure barrenness. Ploss, i. *Weib*, 434. A Gipsy charm quoted by Leland from Dr. von Wlislocki prescribed oats to be given to a mare out of an apron or gourd, with an incantation expressly bidding her "Eat, fill thy belly with young!" *Gip. Sorc.*, 84.

[2] W. A. Clouston, in Burton, iii. *Suppl. Nights*, 576, quoting *Indian N. and Q.*

[3] i. Risley, 256.

and pronounces over it an invocation to Saint Anna.[1] Presumably she then eats it. At all events, in Hungary a Gipsy woman in the like circumstances eats at waxing moon grass from the grave of a pregnant woman.[2] Among the Southern Slavs the woman goes to a pregnant woman's grave, calls upon her by name, bites some of the grass off the grave, calls upon her again, conjuring her to grant her a child, and then, taking some earth from the grave, binds it in her girdle.[3] In the Spreewald no Wendish woman dares to eat of two plums grown together on one stalk, or she will bear twins.[4] About Mentone it is believed that a woman who finds a double fruit will have twins.[5] The aboriginal inhabitants of Paraguay supposed that a woman who ate a double ear of maize would give birth to twins.[6] In Saxony, Mecklenburg and Voigtland it would appear that only pregnant women are forbidden to eat double fruit; among the Tangalas the prohibition is extended to the husband; in all cases for the same reason.[7] These taboos are inexplicable save on the supposition that the fruit causes pregnancy.

[1] Leland, *Gip. Sorc.*, 101.

[2] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 439, citing von Wlislocki.

[3] *Ibid.*, citing Krauss.

[4] Von Schulenburg, 232.

[5] J. B. Andrews, in ix. *Rev. Trad. Pop.*, 111.

[6] Featherman, *Chiapo-Mar.*, 444.

[7] Ploss, i. *Kind*, 30, 32; H. Ling Roth, in xxii. *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, 209. In the island of Aurora a woman sometimes takes it into her head "that the origin, or beginning, of one of her children is a cocoa-nut, or bread-fruit, or something of that kind;" and this gives rise to a prohibition of the object for food, just as in the case of a totem. Rev. Dr. Codrington, in xviii. *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, 310; ii. *Rep. Austr. Ass.*, 612. I hardly know how to account for this notion except by the suggestion that such a woman may have eaten the fruit in question about the time her pregnancy commenced, and thence have been led to

It would seem like a relic of the same thought that in Swabia a woman who is "in an interesting condition" for the first time should eat of a tree which bears for the first time; then both of them will become very fruitful. To this there is one exception: if an apple be grafted on a whitethorn, and some of the fruit be given to a pregnant woman to eat, she cannot bear.[1] In contrast to this is a Bosnian custom in which the childless woman seeks for a plant called *apijun*, cuts its roots small and steeps them in foam she has caught from a millwheel, afterwards drinking of the liquid. She then winds her wedding-girdle round a newly grafted fruit-tree, when, if the graft prosper, she also will bear. Another curious magical custom in Bosnia, still more instructive, is employed when a woman has been married for upwards of eleven years without having issue. A lady friend who is so fortunate as to be in that state in which "women wish to be who love their lords" must endeavour to find a stone lying in a pear-tree, as sometimes happens when it is thrown at the ripening fruit and caught by one of the branches. She must then shake the tree until the stone fall. This she must catch in her hands ere it reach the ground, carry it in the left skirt of her dress to the brook, put it into a pitcher, fill the pitcher from the brook so far as to cover the stone, and carry it home.

believe that the pregnancy was in some way due to it. Dr. Codrington, however, upon inquiry, informs me that he never heard of any belief of the kind. It is perhaps worth noting as a coincidence, if nothing more, that on Lepers' Island the two intermarrying divisions are called *branches of fruit*, "as if," says Dr. Codrington, "all the members hang on the same stalk." Codrington, *Melanesians*, 26.

[1] Meier, *Sagen*, 476, 474. It is a saying at Pforzheim: To make a nut-tree bear, let a pregnant woman pick the first nuts. Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 1802.

Next, she gathers dewy grass (it is not stated what she does with it), and speaks into the pitcher and into the water the conjuring formula: "So-and-so shall conceive." After that, she brings the pitcher with the water to the barren woman to drink, and, winding the wedding-garment (it does not appear what portion of the dress is meant) of the latter about her own body, wears it for three months, or longer, until the woman for whom the ceremony is performed shall feel that her desire has been accomplished. The friend, however, must neither eat anything in the patient's house, nor according to one account speak during the ceremony.[1] Now I am not prepared to explain every detail of this performance, though I may revert to some of the items hereafter. The important matter for the moment is the meaning of the stone shaken down from the tree. This can hardly be understood to represent anything but a pear; and inasmuch as the patient cannot eat the stone, its virtues as fruit are transmitted to the water which is given her to drink, the intention being made clear by the utterance of the command, "So-and-so shall conceive."

In China and Japan a medicine called *Kay-tu-sing*, made from the leaves of a tree belonging to the class Ternstromaceæ, is given at full moon with cabalistic formulæ. In the Fiji Islands the woman bathes in a stream, and then both husband and wife take a drink made with the grated root of a kind of bread-fruit tree and the nut of a sort of turmeric, immediately before congress. Siberian brides before the marriage-night eat the cooked fruit of the *Iris Sibirica*. Asparagus seeds and young hop-buds are given

[1] Dr. Krauss, in iii. *Am Urquell*, 276. In Silesia stones are put on the trees on Christmas Eve to make them bear the more. Grimm *Teut. Myth.*, 1825.

as salad to women in Styria against barrenness. The Czech women of Bohemia drink an infusion of juniper to obtain children; and coffee enjoys a high reputation in Franconia. Serb women get a woman already pregnant to put yeast into their girdles; they sleep with it over night, and eat it in the morning at breakfast.[1]

Before passing from the eating of fruit and vegetables, let me point out that the mandrakes, or love-apples, for which Rachel bargained with Leah, were believed to be possessed of power to put an end to barrenness; and this, as it appears by the record in Genesis, quite independently of sexual intercourse, for Rachel gave up her husband to her sister in exchange for them. Whether it be from the narcotic properties of the fruit, or from the likeness of the root to the human form, or both, the mandrake has been during all history credited with supernatural powers. In particular, it has been held potent as a cause of pregnancy. Henry Maundrell, travelling in Palestine in the spring of 1697—barely two centuries ago—was informed that it was then customary for women who wanted children to lay mandrakes under the bed.[2] The recipe current during the Middle Ages for gathering mandrakes was very much like that still practised by Danubian Gipsies to obtain a kind of orchid which they call boy-root. The root is half laid bare with a knife never before used, and a black dog is tied by the tail to it. A piece of ass-flesh is then offered to the

[1] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 431, 432, 434, 445, citing various authorities. Compare Queen Isolte's lily, referred to *ante*, page 91. What is the meaning of the attribution, widely spread in Europe, of children to trees or vegetables? See, for examples, iv. *Am Urquell*, 224 *et seqq.*; Zingerle, *Sagen*, 110; Finamore, *Trad. Pop. Abr.*, 56. In England children are said to come out of the parsley-bed.

[2] *Gen.* xxx. 14. *Early Trav.*, 434.

animal; and when he springs after it he pulls out the plant. The representation of a linga is carved out of the root, wrapped in a piece of hart's leather, and worn on the naked left arm to promote conception.[1] The Persians are said still to use the mandrake as an amulet for the same purpose, and to call it man's root or love-root.[2]

Animal substances of various kinds have been taken with the like intent. An insect in India, called *pillai-púchchi*, or son-insect, is swallowed in large numbers by women in the hope of bearing sons.[3] They thus do voluntarily what the mothers of Conchobar and Cuchulainn are reported to have done against their wills. English gallants at one time were said to swallow loaches in wine to become prolific. Farquhar in *The Constant Couple*, written at the end of the seventeenth century, puts into the mouth of one of his characters the words: "I have toasted your ladyship fifteen bumpers successively, and swallowed Cupids like loaches in every glass."[4] On every Christmas Eve unfruitful wives among the Transylvanian Saxons eat fish and throw the bones into flowing water, in the hope of bringing children into the world.[5] Hungarian Gipsy-women gather the floating threads of cobweb from the fields in autumn, and in the waxing of the moon they with their husbands eat them, murmuring an incantation to the Keshalyi, or Fate, whose sorrow at this season for her lost mortal husband causes her to tear out her hair. These threads are believed to be the Keshalyi's hair; and the incantation attributes the hoped-for child to

[1] Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Zig.*, 90.

[2] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 439.

[3] Clouston, in Burton, iii. *Suppl. Nights*, 576, citing Pandit Natésa Sástri in *Indian N. and Q.*

[4] Southey, iii. *Commonplace Bk.*, 20, 75.

[5] Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Siebenb. Sachs.*, 54.

them, and invites the Fate to the baptism.[1] In Kamtchatka, women outdo the Hungarian Gipsies. They eat the spiders themselves to obtain children; and a woman who, on bearing, desires to become pregnant soon again, eats her infant's navel-string. Among the Southern Slavs the wife places a wooden bowl full of water beneath a beam of the roof where it is worm-eaten and the worm-dust falls. Her husband strikes the beam with something heavy, so as to shake the dust out of the worm-holes; and she drinks the water containing the dust that falls. Many a woman seeks in knots of hazelwood for a worm, and eats it when found. Masur women in the province of West Prussia make use of the water which drips from a stallion's mouth after he has drunk. Worse is said to be done in Algiers. There, when a woman has already had a child, but has ceased for a long period to conceive, she must drink sheep's urine, or water wherein wax from a donkey's ear has been macerated.[2] The ancient Prussian bride and bridegroom, having been put to bed, but before consummating the marriage, were served with a dish of buck's, bull's, or bear's testicles,[3] probably with a view to begetting a boy. The corresponding portion of a hare was prescribed in wine by our Anglo-Saxon forefathers to the woman who desired a son. "In order that a woman may kindle a male child," a hare's belly dried and sliced and rubbed with a drink is also recommended in the leechbook to be taken by both husband and wife. If the wife alone drank it, she would produce an herma-

[1] Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Zig.*, 13. Compare the story given in the last chapter, *ante*, p. 124.

[2] Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch*, 531; Ploss, i. *Weib*, 432, 440, 441, 443, 431, citing various authorities.

[3] Schröder, 171, citing Hartknoch; Ploss, i. *Weib*, 445.

phrodite. The hare's magical reputation is well known, nor are the foregoing the only prescriptions in the same work from its flesh. Four drachms of female hare's rennet to the woman, and the like quantity of male hare's to the man, in wine, were to be given; and, after directing that the wife should be dieted on mushrooms and forego her bath, we are told: "Wonderfully she will be pregnant."[1] We shall not be inclined to dispute the wonder. In Fezzan a woman's fruitfulness is said to be increased by the plentiful enjoyment of the dried intestines of a young hare which has never been suckled. The flesh of the kangaroo, like the hare a swift animal, is held by the Australian aborigines to cause fertility.[2] A fox's genital organs dried and rubbed to powder are given to women in the Land beyond the Forest against barrenness.[3]

Eggs are naturally supposed to ensure pregnancy. A Gipsy husband will sometimes take an egg and blow the contents into his wife's mouth, she swallowing them;[4] or in Transylvania she will give him at full moon the egg of a black hen to eat by himself.[5] On the island of Keisar in the East Indies, an infertile woman takes a hen's first egg to an old man with a reputation for knowledge, and asks him for help. He lays the egg on a nunu-leaf, and with it presses her breast, muttering blessings the while. Then he cooks the egg in a koli-leaf, takes a bit of it, lays it again on the nunu-leaf, and gives it to the woman to eat. After

[1] Sextus Placitus, i. *Sax. Leechd.*, 345.

[2] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 431, 432, citing Nachtigall and Junk.

[3] Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Siebenb. Sachs.*, 103. In Transylvania hare's flesh, especially the testicles, is also esteemed a specific against impotence and childlessness. *Ibid.*, 169.

[4] Leland, *Gip. Sorc.*, 101.

[5] Von Wlislocki, *Volksdicht.*, 314.

that, he presses the leaf on her nose and breasts, and lightly rubs it upon her shoulders, passing it always downwards, wraps another bit of the egg in the nunu-leaf, and causes it to be preserved in the branches of one of the highest trees in the neighbourhood of her dwelling.[1] On the other hand, in Galicia the *last* egg laid by a hen is credited with having two yolks. It is said to be no bigger than a pigeon's egg. A barren woman who swallows its contents will henceforth bear; or it is given to a cow or other animal with a similar object.[2]

The *Grihya-Sûtra* of Gobhila gives minute directions for the sacrifice offered by the ancient Aryans of India. The object of the Anvashtakya ceremony was the propitiation of the ancestral spirits, to whom three Pindas, or lumps of food, consisting of rice and cow-beef mixed with a certain juice, are offered. After the offering, if the sacrificer's wife wish for a son, she is to eat the middle Pinda, dedicated among the manes especially to her husband's grandfather, uttering at the same time the verse from the *Mantra-Brâhmana*: "Give fruit to the womb, O Fathers!"[3] No doubt the virtue of this prescription consists in the food's having been part of the sacrificial offering. But the cow is so intimately connected with the well-being of all tribes in the Old World who have passed beyond the lower stages of savagery, and has consequently become so well-recognised a symbol of fecundity, that we need not be surprised to find it used in charms to produce offspring. An Old English recipe for a woman who miscarries is to let her take milk of a one-coloured cow in her hand and sup it up

[1] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 442.
[2] J. Spinner of Lemberg, in iv. *Am Urquell*, 125.
[3] xxx. *Sacred Bks.*, 110.

into her mouth, and then go to running water and spit out the milk therein. Next, she must ladle up with the same hand a mouthful of the water and swallow it down, uttering certain words. Lastly, she must, without looking about her either in her going or coming, return, but not into the same house whence she came out, and there taste of meat.[1] Among the Kaffirs an amulet to remove the reproach from a childless woman is made by the medicine-man of the clan from the tail-hairs of a heifer. The heifer must be given to the husband by a kinsman for the purpose; and the charm, when made, is hung round the woman's neck.[2] In Belgium, women desirous of offspring are advised to drink a mixture of the milk of the goat, ass, and sheep.[3]

Of mineral substances Russian women take saltpetre; and in Styria a woman will grate her wedding-ring and swallow the filings.[4] It was a classical superstition that mice were impregnated by tasting salt.[5]

The drinking of water under certain conditions has been held to be productive of children. In the first instance I am about to mention, however, reliance is not placed wholly on the draught. Beside the Groesbeeck spring at Spa in the Ardennes is a footprint of Saint Remacle. Barren women pay a nine days' devotional visit to the shrine of the saint at Spa, and drink every morning a glass of the Groesbeeck water. While drinking, one foot must be placed in the holy footprint.[6] Maidens, we know, in more than one of the tales, have proved the efficacy of divine footprints. In other cases it is unmistakably the draught

[1] iii. *Sax. Leechd.*, 69.
[2] Theal, 201.
[3] Eug. Polain, in ii. *Bull de F.L.*, 82.
[4] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 434, 443.
[5] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, x. 85.
[6] Wolf, *Niederl. Sag.*, 227; ii. *Bull de F.L.*, 82.

which has the virtue. In Thuringia and Transylvania, women who wished to be healed of unfruitfulness drank consecrated water from the baptismal font.[1] A Transylvanian Gipsy woman is said to drink water wherein her husband has cast hot coals, or, better still, has spit, saying as she does so: "Where I am flame be thou the coals! Where I am rain be thou the water!"[2] A South Slavonic woman holds a wooden bowl of water near the fire on the hearth. Her husband then strikes two firebrands together until the sparks fly. Some of them fall into the bowl, and she then drinks the water.[3] The Tusayan, one of the pueblo tribes of North America, have a legend of one of their women who, being pregnant, was left behind on the Little Colorado in their wanderings. Beneath her dwelling is a spring, and any sterile woman who drinks of it will bear children.[4] For Arab women the third chapter of the Koran (which, among other things, relates the birth of the Virgin Mary) is written out in its whole interminable length with saffron in a copper basin; boiling water is poured upon the writing; and the woman in need drinks a part of the water thus consecrated, and washes her face, breast and womb with the remainder.[5] At Bombay a barren woman would cut off the end of the robe of a woman who has borne at least one child, when hung up to dry; or would steal a new-born infant's shirt, steep one end of it in water, drink the water and destroy the shirt. The child to which

[1] ii. Witzschel, 244; Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Siebenb. Sachs.*, 152.

[2] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 443, citing von Wlislocki in general terms. The statement is repeated (as usual without giving his authority) by Leland, *Gip. Sorc.*, 101.

[3] Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch*, 531.

[4] Victor Mindeleff, in viii. *Rep. Bur. Ethn.*, 32.

[5] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 435, citing Sandreczki.

the clothing belonged would then die and be born again from the womb of the woman performing this ceremony.[1] Other women in India wash the loin-cloth of a sanyási, or devotee, and drink the water.[2] We can only surmise that this filthy practice is followed in the hope of obtaining the benefit experienced by the Princess Chand Ráwati in the Sanskrit romance, or the nymph Adrikâ in the *Mahâbhârata*, cited above.

Be this how it may, there is a group of practices to which reference must be made, and which almost match the foregoing in nastiness. Unfortunately the dislike of nastiness is an extremely civilised feeling; and when we read of these things we must remember that we ourselves are not very far removed from a date when powder of mummy was one of the least objectionable remedies in our forefathers' pharmacopœia. We have already found that a Gipsy woman will drink the water wherein her husband has spit. What is the meaning of the expression: "He is the very spit of his father!" current not only in England, but also, according to the learned Liebrecht, in France, Italy, and Portugal, and alluded to by Voltaire and La Fontaine, if it point not back to a similar, perhaps a more repulsive, ceremony formerly practised by the folk all over western Europe? Other Gipsy customs, if Gipsy women are not belied, are quite as bad. A barren woman who succeeds in touching a snake caught in Easter- or Whitsun-week will become fruitful if she spit thrice on it and sprinkle it with her menstruation-blood, repeating the following

[1] Tuchmann, in vi. *Mélusine*, 109, quoting Rehatsek, *Journ. Anthrop. Soc. Bombay.*

[2] Clouston, in Burton, iii. *Suppl. Nights*, 576 note, quoting Pandit Natésa Sástri, *Indian N. and Q.*

incantation: "Grow thick, thou snake! that I thereby may get a child. I am lean as thou art now, therefore rest not. Snake, snake, glide hence, and if I become pregnant I will give thee a crest, an old one, that thy tooth may thereby receive much poison!"[1] Among the Gipsies of Roumania and southern Hungary a sterile woman scratches her husband's left hand between finger and thumb; and he returns the compliment. The blood of both is received in a new vessel, and buried under a tree for nine days. It is then taken up and ass' milk poured into it; and husband and wife drink the mixture before going to it, saying an incantation which reminds us of the Zulu story of the blood in the pot; for its earlier lines run thus: "In the dawn three Fates will come. The first seeks our blood; the second finds our blood; the third makes a child thereout."[2] A Polish woman, to get children, procures a small jar of the blood of another woman at her first child-bearing, and drinks it mixed with brandy.[3] I mentioned just now the practice of the Kamtchatkan women. A Magyar believes he promotes conception by his wife if he mix with his blood white of egg and the white spots in the yolk of a hen's egg, fill a dead man's bone with the mixture, and bury it where he is accustomed to make water.[4] Nay, shavings of a dead man's bone taken in drink will have the same effect; or if taken by a man, they will enchance his

[1] Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Zig.*, 66. Wherever this work is cited, it must be understood, unless otherwise expressed, to deal with the Gipsies of the Danubian countries, where alone, the author says, they are unsophisticated.

[2] Von Wlislocki, in iii. *Am Urquell*, 7.

[3] B. W. Schiffer, in iii. *Am Urquell*, 147.

[4] A. F. Dörfler, in iii. *Am Urquell*, 269.

potency.[1] It was, as we have seen, a dead man's bone which, according to the Mexican saga, when sprinkled with blood, produced the father and mother of the present race of mankind.

Portions of corpses are, in fact, as valuable for unfruitful women as the blood and secretions of living persons, at least in the opinion of the Danubian Gipsies. These people are said to make, for protection from witchcraft, little figures of men and brutes out of a sort of dough of grafting wax taken from the trees in a graveyard, mixed with the powdered hair and nails of a dead child or maiden, and with ashes left after burning the clothes of one who has died. The figures are dried in the sun, and, when required for use, ground into powder. Taken in millet-pap in the increase of the moon this powder accelerates conception.[2] Mr. Lane records disgusting practices on the part of barren women at Cairo. Near the place of execution there is a table of stone where the body of every person who is, in accordance with the usual mode of punishment, beheaded is washed before burial. By the table is a trough to receive the water. This trough is never emptied; and its contents are tainted with blood, and fetid. A woman who desires issue silently passes under the stone table with the left foot foremost, and then over it. After repeating this process seven times, she washes her face in the trough, and, giving a trifling sum of money to the old man and his wife who keep the place,

[1] Von Wlislocki, *Volksleb. Mag.*, 77. According to the same author, the afterbirth of a boy or girl placed under the bed will ensure the procreation of a child of the same sex; but the husband must be careful which side he gets into bed—on the right for a boy, on the left for a girl. *Ibid.*, 80.

[2] Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Zig.*, 103.

goes silently away. Others, with the like intent, step over the decapitated body seven times, also without speaking; and others again dip in the blood a piece of cotton-wool, of which they afterwards make use in a manner which Mr. Lane declines to mention.[1] The stories I have quoted, wherein a skull, reduced to powder and given to a maiden, renders her pregnant, also come from Danubian lands and from the Mohammedan East. The incident of the skull is less horrible than these practices; but what other distinction can be found?

We may illustrate the custom of stepping over the dead body, and at the same time show that in both hemispheres the idea expressed in the stories just referred to is an active principle of conduct. First let me recall the superstition which leads a woman in Bombay to steal another's child; for that is what the ceremony described a page or two back amounts to. In the same way Algonkin women who sought to become mothers flocked to the couches of those about to die, in hope that the vital principle, as it passed from the dying, would enter their bodies and fertilise their sterile wombs.[2] Among the Hurons in the seventeenth century babes who died under one or two months were not placed, like older persons, in sepulchres of bark raised on stakes, but buried in the road, in order that they might enter secretly into the wombs of passing women and be born again. The Jesuit father who reports this custom quaintly adds: "I doubt that the good Nicodemus would have found much difficulty here, although he doubted only for old men: *Quomodo potest homo nasci cum sit senex?*"[3] So

[1] i. Lane, 393, 394.

[2] Brinton, *Myths*, 253.

[3] v. *Rep. Bur. Ethn.*, III, translating *Relations des Jesuites* (1636). In the Banks' Islands are certain spirits called *Nopitu*. It is believed

one of the prescriptions of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers directs a woman who has miscarried to go to the barrow of a deceased man and step thrice over it with certain words conjuring the effects of the miscarriage.[1] We are now in a position to understand why a Gipsy woman eats grass from the grave of a pregnant woman. It is because she expects that the life of the unborn child will enter into her by means of the grass. Evidently the object sought by all these ceremonies connected with the departed is to transfer to the unproductive womb the life which has been snatched away. In the tales of parthenogenesis by means of the powdered skull the identity of the child with the dead man is openly declared; and it is equally unmistakable in the Slavonic story of the girl who was given the hermit's heart to eat. I shall return to this subject in the next chapter.

The blood would impart its power to the water it putrified, wherein the Cairene women washed. Washing in water endowed with supernatural power is not uncommon elsewhere. Transylvanian Saxon women not only drink of baptismal water: they also wash in it, preferably on Midsummer Day.[2] Among the Galician Jews unfruitful women when they bathe according to their ritual dip themselves nine times under water.[3] Saint Verena, one of the illustrious obscure of mediæval mythology, bathed in the Verenenbad at Baden in the Aargau, and thereby conferred on it such virtue that pregnant women or such as wish for children, if they bathe there, soon attain their desire.[4] The

that a woman sometimes hears one of them say: "Mother, I am coming to you," and feels it entering into her; and it is afterwards born as an ordinary child. Codrington, 154. This does not appear to be a case of migration.

[1] iii. *Sax. Leechd.*, 66.

[2] Von Wlislocki, *Volksgl. Siebenb. Sachs.*, 75, 152.

[3] Schiffer, in iv. *Am Urquell*, 187.

[4] Kohlrusch, 324.

reference to pregnant women must no doubt be understood of those who wish to avoid miscarriage and to be safely delivered. German tales and popular saws used to speak—perchance they still do—of a Kinderbrunnen, or Children's Well, whence babies were fetched, as in England from the parsley bed. The Bride's Well, in Aberdeenshire, was at one time the resort of every bride in the neighbourhood on the evening before her marriage. Her maidens bathed her feet and the upper part of her body with water drawn from it; and this bathing, we are told, "ensured a family."[1] The well into which Pûran, that Panjâbî Joseph, was thrown, is situate on the highroad between Siâlkot and Kalowâl. His residence in it sanctified it to such an extent that the women of those parts believe that if they bathe in it they will become fruitful.[2] Panjâbî women sometimes adopt more questionable means. They wash naked in a boat in a field of sugar-canes, or under a mango-tree. Mangoes, it will be remembered, are favourite phallic fruits in Indian tales. Properly these women ought to burn seven houses. But this is cruelly forbidden by English law; and they have to content themselves with burning secretly at murky midnight on Sunday, and as far as possible at a cross-road, a small quantity of clay from seven dwellings. On this fire they heat the water wherewith to wash. Or, during the night of the feast of Divali—always a night in the moonless half of the month—the husband draws water at seven different wells in an earthen pot, and places in the water leaves plucked from seven trees. He brings the pot to his wife at a crossway where the roads meet roughly at right angles. She must sprinkle herself with the water unseen by anybody. The husband then strips and puts on new

[1] Rev. W. Gregor, in iii. *Folklore*, 68.

[2] i. *Leg. Panj.*, 2.

clothes. This is indeed a putting-off of the old man. Or else the woman perfectly nude covers a space in the middle of the crossway, and there lays leaves from the five royal trees, the *ficus religiosa*, *ficus indica*, *acacia speciosa*, mango, and *butea frondosa*. On these she places a little figure of the god Rama, sits on the figure and washes her entire body with water in five vases drawn from five wells, four of which must be situated at the four points of the compass from the town or village, and the fifth to the north-east in the outskirts. She pours the water from the vases into a receptacle whose bottom is pierced by a hole whence the contents may fall on her body. The ceremony must be accomplished in absolute solitude, and all the utensils must be left on the spot.[1]

Among the ancient Greeks various streams and springs were deemed of virtue against barrenness. Dr. Ploss cites divers classical writers as recording the claims of the river Elatus in Arcadia, the Thespian spring on the island of Helicon, the spring near the temple of Aphrodite on Hymettos, and the warm springs of Sinuessa. Others might easily be found, if necessary, both ancient and modern. A curious rite is reported among the Serbs. A young, sterile married woman cuts a reed, fills it with wine, and sews it, together with an old knife and a cake, in a linen bag. Holding this bag under her left arm she wades in flowing water, while some one on the brink prays for her: "Fulfil my prayer, O God, O Mother of God," and so on through the whole gamut of sanctities. During this prayer the wader drops the bag in the stream, and, coming out, sets her feet in two braziers, out of which her husband must lift her and carry her home. Here we have unmistakably a prayer and

[1] vi. *Mélusine*, 111, quoting *Panjab N. and Q.*, and *Indian N. and Q.*

offerings of food and drink to the water, the latter remaining but little changed while the former puts on a Christian guise. A parallel case is that of the Burmal er Rabba spring at Sidi Mecid, near Constantine, in Algeria, frequented both by Jewesses and Moors for the removal of infecundity. Each of these women slays a black hen before the door of the grotto, offers inside a wax taper and a honey-cake, takes a bath and goes away assured of the speedy accomplishment of her wishes. Inasmuch as sacrifices are foreign to Islam, it is obvious that the ceremony is a survival of an older cult. Curiously enough, the Dyaks of Borneo, who are still frankly heathen, offer domestic fowls to the water-goddess against unfruitfulness. The afflicted person (sometimes it is a man) gives a big feast called Cararamin, and goes to the haunt of the Jata, or goddess, in question in a boat beautifully adorned, taking a domestic and other fowls with gilded beaks as offerings. They are thrown living into the water, or their heads are merely cut off and offered, while the body is consumed by the votary. In many instances, we are told, carved wooden figures of birds are made use of instead of the real article. In the islands of Watabela, Aaru and the Sula Archipelago, barren women and their husbands go to the ancestral graves, or, if Moslems, on Friday to a certain sacred tomb, to pray together with some old women. They bring offerings which include a goat or pig and water. The husband prays for a medicine, and promises, if a child be given him, to offer the goat (or pig, if a heathen), or to give it to the people to eat. It is expected that after this the medicine will be prescribed to both husband and wife in dreams. They both wash with the water they have brought, which is consecrated by standing for a while on the grave, and eat together some of

the food, leaving the rest on the grave. They take the goat, or pig, back home, to be sacrificed in accordance with the husband's vow, only if the wife become pregnant. The Nature-goddess of the Yorubas on the west coast of Africa is represented as a pregnant female; and the water that is consecrated by being kept in her temple is highly esteemed for infertility and difficult labours.[1] And in general we may refer not only to the numerous wells and springs that even yet in Europe have a similar reputation, but also to the rites practised in connection with water by a bride on being brought to her new home. It would be too great a wandering from our present subject to discuss these rites in detail. But one at least of the objects they have in view is the production of offspring. I add a few references at the foot of the page for those who wish to pursue the inquiry.[2] Meantime it will be seen that the practices passed in review throughout this and the preceding paragraph bear a remarkable analogy to the stories wherein we are presented with the Supernatural Birth as caused by bathing; and it will not be forgotten that the mother of the Erse hero Aedh Sláine does not succeed in bearing a human child until she has washed in the consecrated water: drinking of it alone was insufficient. Having regard to the stories

[1] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 436, 437, 438, 439, referring to various authorities. The Kich Negresses about Adaël, west of the White Nile, in Equatorial Africa, however, think it necessary to wash in liquids much less innocent than water, unless they want to be sterile. Kara Kirghiz women spend a night beside a holy well. v. Radloff, 2. The ceremonies they practise are not mentioned.

[2] Jevons, *Plutarch's Roman Questions*, ci.; iii. *L'Anthropologie*, 548, 558; *Congress* (1891) *Report*, 345; Kolbe, 163; Rodd, 94; Dalton, *passim*; Ploss, i. *Weib*, 445, citing Böder; Winternitz, *Altind. Hochz.*, 47, 101.

of Danae and the Mexican goddess who was fructified by the rain, it is interesting too to note that Hottentot maidens must run about naked in the first thunderstorm after the festival when their maturity is celebrated. The rain, pouring down over the whole body, has the virtue of making fruitful the girl who receives it and rendering her capable of having a large offspring.[1] It is even possible that a similar superstition was once known in Germany. A saying current in many parts points in this direction, namely, that when it rains on St. John's day the nuts will be wormy and many girls pregnant[2]—unless, as a Slav practice already cited may suggest, the pregnancy be the result of their eating the wormy nuts.

A few other usages must be referred to before we leave the subject. Several of the stories I have cited attribute pregnancy to the rays of the sun. The ancient Parsees, as we might have expected, believed that the beams of the rising sun were the most effective means for giving fruitfulness to the newly wedded; and even to-day, in Persia and among the Tartars in Central Asia, the morning after the marriage has been consummated the pair are brought out to be greeted by the rising sun.[3] At old Hindu marriages the bride was made to look towards the sun, or in some other way exposed to its rays. This was expressly called the Impregnation-rite.[4] Among the Chacos, an aboriginal tribe of the southern part of South America, the bride

[1] Hahn, *Tsuni-||goam*, 87.

[2] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 443, citing Wuttke. In Hainaut a profusion of fruit on the nut-trees prognosticates many bastards during the year. Harou, 28.

[3] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 446.

[4] Frazer, ii. *Golden Bough*, 238, note, quoting Monier-Williams, *Religious Life and Thought in India.*

and bridegroom sleep the first night on a skin with their heads towards the west; for, we are told, the marriage is not considered as ratified until the rising sun shines on their feet the succeeding morning.[1] Whether or not it is really their feet on which the sun is expected to shine, the ratification of the marriage by the sun must be intended to obtain the blessing of fertility.

It was customary at Rome to offer goats at the Lupercal; and two youths underwent the pretence of a human offering, doubtless once anything but a sham. A sacrificial meal followed. The Luperci, then, girt with skins of some of the slain animals, cut other skins into strips, and armed with the strips ran up and down the Via Sacra, across the Forum and through the city, striking all whom they met. Women who desired to be made fruitful used, it is said, to place themselves naked in the way and receive the blows upon their palms.[2] Dr. Ploss compares with this the procedure in Voigtland and other parts of Germany at the Easter festival, when the young fellows chase the girls out of their beds with green twigs.[3] Similar is the object of the custom observed from India to the Atlantic Ocean of throwing grain and seeds of one sort or another over a bride, and apparently of the custom of flinging old shoes. The wandering Gipsies of Transylvania are said to throw old shoes and boots on a newly married pair when they enter their tent, expressly to enchance the fertility of the union. In Germany, pieces of cake are thrust against the bride's body.[4] About Chemnitz a table-cloth seems to acquire prolific virtue by serving at a first christening

[1] T. J. Hutchinson, in iii. *Trans. Ethnol. Soc., N.S.*, 327.
[2] i. Preller, 389; Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 425. [3] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 435.
[4] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 445; Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 1794.

dinner; and it is sometimes cast over a barren wife.[1] The Asturian ballad already cited in an earlier chapter ascribes to the borage the power to affect any woman treading on it as it affected the unfortunate princess Alexandra.[2] Rolling beneath a solitary apple-tree seems an approved method of obtaining pregnancy among the Kara Kirghiz women.[3]

Amulets play a great part in procuring offspring. I have only space for a few examples. A porcupine's foot is a favourite talisman among the Moorish women of Marocco. The Northern Basuto in the Transvaal lay the fault of childlessness on the husband. He has done to death by witchcraft one of his kin, or committed some other wrong towards the dead man, who is therefore angry. After consulting a wizard, and ascertaining to whom is to be ascribed the evil, he goes to the grave, acknowledges his fault, prays to the dead for forgiveness, and takes back from the tomb a stone, a twig, or some other object, which he carries about, or deposits in his courtyard, as a fetich or a charm. If he duly honour it, it will restore the good understanding between the deceased and himself, and give him the benefit he desires. An Otchi Negress will take a fetich conditionally on its giving her children. If a child be born, it is a fetich-child and is considered to belong to the fetich, just as in many of the tales the child is given by an ogre upon the stipulation that it shall belong to the ogre, and be fetched away, either when he pleases, or at a fixed period. The women of Mecca commonly

[1] Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 1795.

[2] De Charencey, *Le Fils*, 26.

[3] v. Radloff, 2. Among the Southern Slavs the bride is unveiled beneath an apple-tree and the veil is sometimes hung on the tree. Krauss, *Sitte und Brauch*, 450.

wear a magical girdle to yield them fertility. In Persia, as we have seen, the mandrake is worn as an amulet.[1] On the Banks' Islands, women take certain stones to bed with them for the same purpose.[2]

In the interior of western Africa, over the border of Angola, on the way from Malange, barren Negresses have been found wearing two little carved ivory figures representing the two sexes in a string round the body.[3] The phalloi worn by Italian women are familiar to every student of folklore; and the images worn by Danubian Gipsies have already been mentioned. The worship of the linga is a favourite one with Hindu women. The representation is sometimes carved and painted red, at other times a mere rough upright stone. Such idols are to be seen everywhere in India; and their pious worshippers may often be observed decking them with flowers, red cloth or gilt paper, like the Madonna in Roman Catholic churches. Siva himself, the third in the modern Hindu Trimurti, is represented under this form; and under this form—softened down by Southey in his finest poem from the grotesque obscenity of the original story—he appeared when

> "Brahma and Vishnu wild with rage contended,
> And Siva in his might their dread contention ended."

A cannon, old and useless and neglected, belonging to the Dutch Government, lay in a field at Batavia, on the island of Java. It was taken by the native women for a linga. Dressed in their best, and adorned with flowers, they used to worship this piece of senseless iron, presented it with

[1] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 437, 439. For other amulets, see *ibid.*, 441; Klunzinger, 399.

[2] Codrington, 184.

[3] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 439.

offerings of rice and fruits, miniature sunshades, and coppers, and completed the performance by sitting astride upon it as a certain method of winning children. At length an order arrived from the Government to remove it as lumber; and removed it was, to the great dismay of the priests, who had pocketed the coppers and had manufactured and sold the sunshades—probably also to the dismay of the ladies who depended upon its miraculous power—but at all events, it is satisfactory to know, without injuriously affecting the increase of the population.[1] At Roman weddings one of the ceremonies was the culminating rite so dear to these Batavian women; and its object was that the bride might conceive.[2] At Athens there is a rock near the Callirrhoe, whereon women who wish to be made fruitful rub themselves, calling on the Moirai to be gracious to them. And Bernhard Schmidt, writing on the subject, recalls that not far from that very spot the heavenly Aphrodite was honoured in ancient times as the eldest of the Fates.[3] At the foot of another hill is a seat cut in the rock on the banks of a stream. There the Athenian women were wont to sit and let themselves slip on the back into the brook, calling on Apollo for an easy delivery. The stone is black and polished with the constant repetition of these invocations; for still on a clear moonlit night young women steal silently to the spot to indulge in the same exercise, though we may presume their prayers are nominally addressed to some other divinity.[4] Near Verdun in Luxemburg, Saint

[1] A. H. Kiehl, in vi. *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, 359.

[2] Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, vi. 9; Ploss, i. *Weib*, 435, quoting Thomas Bartholinus.

[3] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 436.

[4] Bérenger-Féraud, 201, quoting Yéménier.

Lucia's arm-chair is also to be seen in the living rock. There childless women sit and pray, afterwards awaiting with confidence the fulfilment of their petitions. A curious rite used until the Reformation to be performed at the shrine of Saint Edmund at Bury St. Edmund's. A white bull was kept on the fields of the manor of Habyrdon, and never yoked to the plough nor baited at the stake. When a married woman wished for offspring he was "led in procession through the principal streets of the town to the principal gate of the monastery, attended by all the monks singing, and a shouting crowd; the woman walking by him and stroking his milk-white sides and pendent dewlaps. The bull being then dismissed, the woman entered the church, and paid her vows at the altar of Saint Edmund, kissing the stone, and entreating with tears the blessing of a child."[1] In the Pyrenees near Bourg d'Oueil is a stone figure of a man about five feet in height, on which barren women rub themselves, embracing and kissing it. In Brittany there are several shrines of this worship. Newly-wedded pairs from the neighbourhood of Plouarnel and Saint Renan sometimes go to the menhir of Kervéathon in the *lande* of Kerloas; and there bride and bridegroom rub simultaneously their abdomens against the two rough sides of the stone. By this the husband hopes to get many sons—the wife hopes to get not merely fecundity but the whip-hand of her husband. Near Rennes the newly married go, the first Sunday of Lent, to jump on a stone called the Bride-stone (*Pierre des Épousées*), singing the while a special song. Down to the Revolution there stood at

[1] *County F.L., Suffolk*, 124, quoting *Corolla Varia* by Rev. W. Hawkins (1634), and deeds of the monastery relating to the property and the bull. The rite had evidently been mutilated.

Brest a chapel of Saint Guignolet, containing a priapian statue of the holy man. Women who were, or feared to be, sterile, used to go and scrape a little of the phallos, which they put into a glass of water from the well and drank. Another Breton saint called Guerlichon was similarly honoured.[1]

There is a miraculous stone on the sacred hill of Nikko in Japan, at which women who want to become mothers throw stones, sure of having their ambition gratified if they succeed in striking it. And in the Uyeno Park at Tokio is a seated statue of Buddha. Whoso succeeds in flinging a stone upon the sacred knees attains the same result. At Whitchurch near Cardiff, in the last century, a woman animated by the wish for children would go on Easter Monday to the parish churchyard, armed with two dozen tennis balls, half of them covered with white leather and the other half with black, and would throw them over the church. The operation was to be repeated every year until her wish was accomplished.[2] I shall return to these practices in a future chapter. In the Tirol there are miraculous images beside which little waxen figures in the shape of toads are hung. The figures are called *Muettern.* It is believed that every woman has inside her a creature in this form. Many a mother has gone to sleep with her mouth open, and the muetter has crept out and gone to plunge into the nearest water. If she do not close her mouth, the muetter by-and-bye gets back safely, and the woman, previously sick, is restored to health. But if she close her mouth, she dies. Unfruitful women offer these waxen

[1] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 444; Bérenger-Féraud, 200. Other Breton cases are referred to by Sébillot, i. *Trad. et Sup.*, 51.

[2] vi. *Mélusine*, 154, quoting the *Temps*; 258, quoting *Byegones.*

figures to images of the Madonna, or of the Pietà.[1] On the Gold Coast, Bassamese women who are possessed by a demon of barrenness meet at the fetich hut and deposit consecrated vases and figures of clay representing mothers nursing, while they present to the fetich offerings of tobacco and handkerchiefs. The demons are frightened away by the noise of fire-arms, drums and the blowing of horns. The officiating chief makes an offering of gold-dust, and then spirts a mouthful of rum over the belly of every woman who desires issue. An improvised banquet brings the solemnity to a close.[2] The figures in both these cases may be regarded as a symbolic dedication of the mother, or more probably the child, to the supernatural being whose aid, like that of the ogre in the tale, is invoked. The women on the Babar islands in the Malay Archipelago take measures bearing some superficial resemblance to the last, but widely different in meaning. The help of a man who is rich in children is first obtained. The husband then collects fifty or sixty young kalapa fruits, while the wife prepares a doll about twenty inches long in red kattun. On the appointed day the man comes to their hut, puts the husband and wife to sit near together, and sets before them a plate containing sirih-pinang and a young kalapa fruit. The latter is opened, and both husband and wife are sprinkled with the juice. The assistant then takes a fowl, holds its feet against the woman's head and prays, apparently in her name: "O Upulero, make use of this fowl, let fall a man, let him step down into my hands, I pray thee, I

[1] Zingerle, *Sitten*, 26. Ploss, i. *Weib*, 444, reproduces a photograph of one of these votive figures bought by the author in a wax-chandler's shop at Salzburg as recently as 1890.

[2] Featherman, *Nigritians*, 139, quoting Hecquard.

implore thee, let fall a man, let him step down into my hands and on my lap!" He asks the woman: "Is the child come?" She answers: "Yes, it is already sucking." Then he touches the man's head with the fowl's feet and mutters certain formulæ. The fowl is put to death by a blow against the posts of the hut, opened, and the veins about the heart probed. It is laid on a plate and put on the domestic altar. The news is spread in the village that the woman is pregnant, and every one comes and congratulates her. The husband borrows a cradle, in which the doll is placed, and for seven days it is treated as a new-born child.[1] Here it is simulation that plays the important part. In addition to the prayer and sacrifice, which might be found anywhere, the Babar islander pretends that the prayer has been granted, and acts accordingly. Simulation as a form of magic is well known over the whole earth. As applied to cause conception it is not one of the practices to which we have had to direct special attention in this chapter. But it deserves a passing notice as strengthening the general argument that conception is held to be caused by other than natural means. A common form of simulation for the purpose of obtaining children is found in the custom of putting a boy to sit on the bride's lap at a wedding. The ceremony was usual among the ancient Aryans, and is prescribed in detail in the *Âpastamba*.[2] It is still followed in the east of Europe and elsewhere. In England, to rock an empty cradle is to rock a new baby into it. The Bechuana, Basuto and Agni women carry dolls, which they treat like children.[3] And in China a barren

[1] Ploss, i. *Weib*, 442, quoting Riedel.

[2] Winternitz, 23, 75; Schroeder, 123.

[3] Casalis, 265; Tylor, *E. Hist.*, 109; M. Delafosse, in iv. *L'Anthropologie*, 444.

woman adopts a little girl to produce conception—a practice for which an elaborate reason is assigned. In the invisible world, it is said, every woman is represented by a tree, which bears as many flowers as she is fated to bear children. If she be sterile, her tree will not bear; and then, just as a fruit-tree is grafted to make it bring forth fruit, so by adopting a little girl she will provoke on her tree the germination of flowers, and thus become fruitful.[1]

Reviewing the superstitious rites here brought together, it will be seen that no case is found where fecundity has been held to be procured by the sense of smell, or of sight, as in some of the tales. It was, however, an ancient classical belief that partridges were impregnated in some such way; for Pliny tells us that if the female only stood opposite to the male and the wind blew from him towards her, or if he simply flew over her head, or very often if she merely heard his voice, it would be enough.[2] Though we do not find the possibility of obtaining fecundity by a glance, we have in the superstitions of the Evil Eye so widely, well-nigh universally, spread a belief in a power quite as great, though exercised in a different way. In the power of magicians to eat by a look, the Evil Eye performed the converse of impregnation. The authorities on this subject have been laboriously collected by M. Tuchmann, to whose work the reader is referred.[3] Belief in impregnation by the wind only would seem to present difficulties at least as great as any of these. Yet it was a common belief among

[1] vi. *Mélusine*, 231, quoting Doolittle.

[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, x. 51. See also Ælian, *Nat. Anim.*, xvii. 15. As to the power of flowers to imprint themselves by their smell on the fœtus, see Vasconcellos, 201.

[3] v. *Mélusine*, 248.

the ancients, not merely used for a poetical ornament by Vergil, but repeated without question as a literal fact by men of lofty intellect and wide attainments like Pliny and Augustine, that mares were, in Lusitania, as the former asserts, or in Cappadocia, according to the latter, fertilised by wind.[1] And if the inhabitants of the district of Lampong, in the island of Sumatra, be not maligned, they, at the beginning of the present century, believed all the people on the neighbouring island of Engano to be females who were impregnated in the same manner.[2]

It cannot of course be asserted that in every instance of magical practices collected in the present chapter, pregnancy is believed to be supernaturally caused by the means prescribed, apart from the natural means, as in the tales. Indeed, the natural means are often expressly to be employed in addition to the magical ceremonies. Yet the line between natural and supernatural is so faint in savage minds that it is difficult to know how much is to be ascribed to the one and how much to the other. And we are justified in believing, not only that the practices tend to render credible the stories, but further that the stories and the practices—as well as superstitions, like those mentioned in the last paragraph, unconnected with practice—are inextricably intermingled, and owe their origin to the same habit of thought. Nor must we forget that the relationship between father and child was in early times imperfectly recognised. The researches of the last five-and-twenty or thirty years have established that among many savage races the father was held to be no relation to his children. Even where he exercised, as among the native Australians,

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, viii. 67; Aug. *Civ. Dei*, xxi. 5.

[2] Marsden, 297.

despotic power over wife and children, the latter were held to be his rather as owner than as begetter ; and the ownership of both wife and children passed at his death to his brothers, while at the same time the relationships of the children were reckoned exclusively with their mother's kin. This system of relationships, known scientifically as Mother-right, traces whereof are almost everywhere found, can only have sprung either from a kind of promiscuity wherein the true father could not have been ascertained, or from an imperfect recognition of the great natural fact of fatherhood. Both causes, perhaps, played their part. But at least we may say that the attitude of mind which favours the practices and beliefs we have been discussing is one which would be consistent, and consistent alone, with the imperfect recognition of paternity. And it is unquestionable that the superstitions, once rooted, would be likely to survive long after paternity had become an accepted fact, and, tenacious of their existence, would seek new grounds of justification. This would have the effect of gradually transforming the stories from matter-of-fact statements of no unusual interest into sacred legends, into mere tales told for pleasure, and into wonders believed but unexplained, and the practices into religious rites and rude medical prescriptions.

CHAPTER VII

DEATH AND BIRTH AS TRANSFORMATION.

IN the course of our examination of tales of Supernatural Birth we have more than once found that birth was to the hero merely a new manifestation. He had previously existed in other shapes, and by undergoing birth (preceded sometimes, but not always, by death) he was entering on a new career, he was ascending a new stage of being. The child in the Annamite story of Posthumous Revenge had been an eel, with liberty of metamorphosis into other forms. Marjatta's child in the half-heathen postscript to the *Kalevala* had been the creator of the sun and moon. Yehl, the Thlinkit hero-god, repeatedly became the son of ladies, who were beguiled into swallowing a pebble, a blade of grass, or even a drop of water, which was no other than the divinity in disguise. The subject, however, is so important, not merely in the general study of savage ideas, but in relation to the myth of Perseus, especially in its modern forms, that it is necessary to deal with it a little more at length.

The oldest known story wherein transformation of this kind forms an incident is that of *The Two Brothers*. The manuscript now in the British Museum was written by the scribe Enna, or Ennana, and belonged to the Egyptian

monarch Seti II., of the nineteenth dynasty, before he came to the throne. We have the story, therefore, in the shape it bore about the earlier half of the thirteenth century before Christ. It is a long one, and I have only space for a very meagre abstract. There were, thus it runs, two brothers, Anpu and Bata, of whom Anpu, the elder, was married, and Bata served him. Anpu's wife fell in love with the younger brother, and tempted him as Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph, and with a similar result. The elder brother, when his wife denounced Bata to him, became like a panther with rage, and lay in wait behind the stable-door to slay his brother when he returned from the field. The oxen, however, warn the youth, who flees and invokes the Sun-god Horus to judge between himself and his brother. With the god's assistance he escapes; and Chnum, at Horus' request, makes a wife for him, that he may not dwell alone. His happiness, however, is not lasting. The sea carries one of the woman's fragrant locks to Egypt, where it is taken to the king, who sends to seek its owner, and makes her his favourite. Now Bata kept his heart in the top of the flower of the Cedar. This was known to the woman; and by her advice the king sent and cut down the Cedar. The flower fell to the ground, and Bata's heart with it; and he died. When he escaped from his brother, Bata had found means to convince him of his innocence, and had given him a sign, saying that when Anpu should take a jug of beer in his hand and it should turn into froth, then he should know that Bata was dead, and he should come and look for him. Anpu, warned in this way of his brother's death, sought and found him; and after a long search he discovered his heart lying beneath the Cedar. He picked it up and put it into a cup of cold

water. Bata thereupon revived, and having drunk up the water and his heart with it, he became as he had been before. The next day he assumed the form of a great bull with all the sacred marks, which his brother brought and gave to the king. In this form Bata found means to make himself known to his wife. She for her part was by no means pleased to see him; and having wheedled an oath out of the king that he would grant her whatsoever she asked, she demanded the bull's liver. As he was being slain two drops of his blood fell upon the king's door-posts, and forthwith grew up two mighty persea-trees. One of these trees spoke to the Favourite, accusing her of her crimes, and declaring: "I am Bata, I am living still, I have transformed myself." She caused the trees to be cut down; but while she stood by to watch, a splinter flew off, and, entering her mouth, rendered her pregnant. In due time she gave birth to a son, who became prince, and upon the king's death succeeded to the throne. Then he summoned the nobles and councillors; his wife was brought to him, and he had a reckoning with her.[1]

There are many points of exceeding interest in this, one of the oldest fairy-tales on record. For us, however, they centre on Bata's transformations. He changes first into a sacred bull without undergoing death. He is then slain; and from his blood spring up two persea-trees. These are cut down; and his final metamorphosis is, by the medium of birth, once more into a human being; for there can be no doubt that the child born of the king's Favourite is regarded as Bata himself. A modern Transylvanian *märchen* unfolds a similar series of adventures; though

[1] ii. *Records of the Past*, 137; Maspero, 3.

it is wanting in the consummate irony of the Egyptian tale, which makes the lady become pregnant of her foe and give him at last the life to avenge himself of her villainies. A king overhears two maidens boasting of what they would do, the one, if she were married to him, the other, if she were his cook. He marries the former, and makes the other his cook. But the latter is jealous; and when the queen bears twins, a boy and a girl with golden hair, she contrives to bury them in the dung-heap, and impose upon the king and court with a cat and dog, which she alleges to be the queen's offspring. The king therefore buries his queen alive, and marries the cook. Out of the dung-heap grew two golden fir-trees, in whose beauty the king took great pleasure. His new wife, on the contrary, is uneasy, and declares she cannot rest unless on boards made from those very trees. The king reluctantly has them cut down; and now she would be happy, but that in the night she hears the boards beneath the royal bed conversing as brother and sister. Accordingly the next day she causes them to be burnt in the oven; but two sparks fall among some barley, which is given to an ewe. The ewe drops two lambs with golden fleeces. As soon as she sees them, the queen falls sick and craves for their hearts to eat. Once more compliant, her husband allows them to be killed. Their hearts are roasted for the queen; their entrails are thrown into the river. Two pieces are carried by the water and thrown on a distant shore, where the two children with golden hair reappear from them, and so charm the sun with their beauty that he stands to watch them and goes not down for seven whole days. God, wondering why the night so long delayed, went to inquire of the sun, and was shown the twins. By His means they were restored to their father,

the wicked queen was punished, and their mother brought back to life.[1]

M. Cosquin, commenting on the Egyptian tale, has brought together a number of analogues, chiefly European. I proceed to notice some of these, and a few others containing a similar chain of incidents. In a Roumanian story which follows the main lines of the Transylvanian, an emperor's son weds the youngest of three daughters. The heroine's foes, however, are not her sisters, but her husband's stepmother and *her* daughter. As she had foredoomed, she bears twin sons with golden hair and a golden star on the forehead. By his stepmother's treachery her husband is induced to believe that she has given birth to two puppies; and he orders her to be buried in the earth to the breast, that the world might know what was her punishment who would betray the emperor's son. Then he married his stepsister. The twins had been interred beneath the emperor's window; and out of their grave grew two fair aspen-trees. In three days they had attained the stature of three years, and the emperor took great pleasure in them. Long did his wife beg for permission to cut them down ere he yielded; but, after all, emperors are but men. So cut down they were, and made by his command, the one into a bedstead for himself and the other for the empress. But the bedsteads talked, as in the Transylvanian tale, and the empress overheard them. The next day she caused them to be burnt, and their ashes thrown

[1] Haltrich, 1 (Story No. 1). In a Wallachian variant the trees are apple-trees, the mother is only expelled, and the tremendous *Deus ex machinâ* of the Transylvanian story is not brought upon the scene. Schott, 121 (Story No. 8). This is a later stage in the history of the tale. See also another variant, Schott, 332.

to the winds. When the fire was hottest there flew out two sparks and fell into the deep water that flowed through the realm. There they became two fish with golden scales. They were caught by the imperial fishermen, and then changed back into their original form of twin boys with golden hair and golden stars. When they had grown up they made their way to the palace and told their tale, to the confusion and condemnation of their enemies, and the restoration of their mother to her rightful place.[1] According to a Sicilian variant, the heroine, married against the will of the queen, her mother-in-law, bears thirteen children, twelve sons and a daughter. They are thrown into the garden, where they grow up as twelve orange-trees and a lemon-tree. A goat eats them and bears the children anew.[2] In a Bengalee tale the heroine kindly relieves her fellow-wife by accidentally tumbling into a well. A rishi explains to her husband that she was not of royal blood, but had been born a rat, and changed by him at her own wish into a cat, then into a dog, a boar, an elephant and a beautiful girl, successively. He directs the well to be filled up, and causes a poppy-tree to grow up out of her flesh and bones; and that is the origin of opium.[3]

A German tale belonging to an entirely different cycle approaches the Egyptian *märchen* in representing the transformations as incidents of a contest between a man and a woman, wherein the man is ultimately victorious. The hero, having disenchanted a king and all his court, obtains a magical sword and becomes the champion of the unspelled monarch against an aggressive neighbour. The

[1] Kremnitz, 30 (Story No. 3), from Slavici.
[2] iv. Pitré, 328 (variant of Story No. 36).
[3] Day, 145 (Story No. 9).

latter has a clever daughter, who entraps the champion by her wiles and makes off with his sword. This results in his total defeat and capture by her father, who all-to hacks him, stuffs the pieces into a bag and sends it to the invaded king with his compliments, and there was his champion. The hero is, however, restored to life by a master-sorcerer, and endowed with the power of assuming what shape he will. He takes that of a magnificent horse, which the invading king is induced to buy. The king's daughter scents a trick, and the horse's head is cut off. Three drops of his blood fall into the apron of the king's cook, and she buries the apron, as the horse has previously directed her, under the eaves. A cherry-tree grows up on the spot; and when the princess cuts it down, the cook throws three chips into the pond, where they change into three golden ducks. The princess kills two, and, capturing the third, takes it into her bedchamber. There it finds the stolen sword and flies off with it. Resuming his proper form, the hero defeats and destroys the aggressive king and his whole family, and marries the compassionate cook.[1] In a Russian story, the hero is betrayed by his wife to the Turks, and killed. Recalled to life, he changes into a marvellous horse with a golden mane, which the sultan buys. But Cleopatra, the hero's wife, recognises her husband through his magical disguise. When the horse is slain, from his blood arises a bull with golden hair. Cleopatra kills it in turn, and from its head an apple-tree springs with fruit of gold. The apple-tree is cut down; and its first chip is transformed into a golden duck, which overswims the river and on the other side regains its pristine form as the hero.[2] A Breton

[1] Wolf, *Deutsche Hausm.*, 390.

[2] Maspero, xvi., quoting Rambaud, *La Russie Épique.*

tale represents the hero as changing himself into a horse. When the horse is put to death, a ball of his curdled blood is put on a stone in the sun and sprinkled with magical water. A cherry-tree grows out of it, laden with fine red cherries. When the cherry-tree is cut down, a cherry is sprinkled, and a beautiful blue bird comes out of it. The treacherous wife is desirous of catching it; and her new husband lays down the hero's magical sword to enable him to move more freely. The bird then seizes the sword, and, rapidly changing back into the hero, puts his false wife and her second choice to death.[1]

In none of the foregoing stories do we find the hero victorious by means of a second birth from a woman. In a White-Russian variant of *The Outcast Wife* group, the heroine, married to a king, has two sisters, who deceive the king as to her offspring and cause her twin boys to be buried alive. Out of their graves grow two maples, one with a golden, the other with a silver, stem. The king puts away his wife, and marries one of her sisters. She has the maples cut down to make a bed, and afterwards burns the bed and sprinkles the ashes on the road. An ewe swallows some of the ashes, and bears two lambs, marked like the boys, with a moon on the head and a star on the nape of the neck. The new queen orders the lambs to be slaughtered, and their entrails to be thrown out into the street. Her divorced sister having gathered up the entrails, cooks and eats them, and thus becomes once more mother to her sons. When they are grown up they reveal the whole story to the king, and obtain the reinstatement of their mother and the punishment of her guilty sister.[2]

[1] Luzel, iii. *Contes Pop.*, 262.

[2] Wratislaw, 138 (Story No. 23), from Afanasief.

A curious tale from Cyprus brings before us a girl who is fated to wed her own father, of whom she is to have a son, and that son she is afterwards to take for husband. In order to defeat the prophecy she contrives her father's murder. From the ground where the body is buried an apple-tree springs up and produces beautiful apples. The heroine buys some, and, eating them, becomes pregnant. When she learns where the apples grew she determines to kill her child. As soon as it is born, therefore, she stabs it in the breast, nails it up in a coffer, and flings the coffer into the sea. It is picked up by a vessel; and the captain, finding the child still living, adopts it. It grows up to manhood and fulfils the prophecy. From the wound-marks on his breast the mother recognises in her husband her own child; and on hearing his story she understands at last how useless it is to struggle against fate, and puts an end to her own life.[1]

Quite another group is reached when we come to a series wherein the heroine first appears in the shape of a fruit. This is opened by the hero, and a maiden comes out. In a *märchen* from Asia Minor the maiden is, in the hero's absence, thrown into a well by a black slave, who takes her place. In the well she becomes a golden fish. When the prince catches it the slave gets him to kill it and make broth of it for her. But three drops of its blood fall to the ground and shoot up into a cypress-tree. The tree is cut down and burnt. A chip clings to the dress of an old woman who comes and asks for a light; and this chip changes again into the heroine.[2] In Basile's version the slave sticks a needle into the lady's temple and transforms

[1] Legrand, 107, from Sakellarios.
[2] i. Von Hahn, 268.

her into a dove. The dove is caught, killed, scalded and plucked, in order to be cooked; and the water and feathers are thrown into the garden. Within three days a citron-tree, like that out of which the heroine originally came, rises, and bears three fine citrons. The king plucks them; and when he has opened them, his true love emerges from the third, and condign punishment is meted out to the slave.[1] A tale from the Deccan presents a maiden, brought up in an eagle's nest, after sundry adventures happily married to a rajah. She is pitched into the water-tank by her jealous fellow-wife. A sunflower grows up in the tank; and the jealous woman, when she finds her husband becoming fond of it, orders her servants to dig it up and burn it. A mango-tree grows up on the spot where the sunflower has been burnt, bearing one magnificent mango. It is gathered by a milk-woman, and turns into the heroine.[2] A variant, which looks like an earlier form of the story, brings the heroine originally out of a bél-fruit. The sunflower is replaced by a lotus; and when the false wife tears the lotus-flower to pieces a bél-tree grows on the spot, bearing one fruit, which contains the Bél-princess once more.[3] In a Cinderella tale, told by the Tjames, Kajong, persecuted by her foster-sister Halœk, throws herself into a lake and suffers transformation into a golden turtle. The king marries Halœk instead, but cannot forget Kajong. The golden turtle is caught, and in the king's absence his wife kills and eats it, throwing the shell behind the house. A bamboo springs up from the shell. When Halœk cooks and eats the bamboo-shoot, the husk becomes a bird. She cooks the bird; and the

[1] ii. *Pentamerone*, 231 (Story No. 59).
[2] Frere, 79 (Story No. 6).
[3] Stokes, 138 (Story No. 21).

feathers, thrown away, turn into a mœkya-tree, the fruit of which bears a resemblance to the outline of a woman. Out of the fruit the heroine comes again.[1]

There is a group of stories very popular in Europe and known to the farthest extremities of Asia and Africa. As usually told, a girl or a boy is killed by an envious brother and buried. Some time after, a bone is picked up and fashioned into a shepherd's pipe; or a reed growing on the grave is cut and made into a similar instrument. No sooner does the musician put the pipe to his mouth than the voice of the murdered child is heard within it, reciting his death and accusing his murderer. Occasionally, however, the tree, or plant, which grows from the grave sings or speaks of itself, as in the Dahoman version, where a mushroom appears on the grave. The mother of the murdered boy is about to pluck it, when it says to her: "Mother, pluck not. I was with my comrades. They gave me two thousand cowries. They only gave one thousand to my brother. Then he cruelly killed me; my brother killed me!" Sometimes it is a rose which speaks of itself, or when it is put to the mouth; sometimes a flute made from the branch of a tree which has grown on the grave. In one case it is a pomegranate from such a tree: when the fruit is brought to the king it changes into the head of the murdered man. At other times the crime is revealed by a whistle, or pipe, which has belonged to the victim, or has fallen in his blood. Again, a bird will proclaim itself the victim and tell the story, or lead the avenging kindred to the grave. A Chinese drama, believed to be founded on a folktale, represents the body as burnt by the assassin,

[1] Landes, *Tjames*, 79 (Story No. 10). It is abstracted in Miss Cox's *Cinderella*, 299.

and the ashes made into a dish. The dish denounces the criminal.[1]

The old Scottish ballad of *Binnorie* belongs to this group, though in all its British variants it has been modernised. Scott's version, the best known, is only half traditional. The elder sister drowns the younger for the sake of her lover. The body is found by the miller in "the bonny mill-dams of Binnorie."

"A famous harper passing by
The sweet pale face he chanced to spy.

. . . . . .

"He made a harp of her breast-bone,
Whose sounds would melt a heart of stone.

"The strings he framed of her yellow hair,
Whose notes made sad the listening ear."

Here the ballad has obviously been manipulated; but a comparison of other versions shows that the sense has been preserved.

"He laid this harp upon a stone,
And straight it began to play alone.

"'O yonder sits my father, the king,
And yonder sits my mother, the queen.

"'And yonder stands my brother Hugh,
And by him my William, sweet and true!'

"But the last tune that the harp played then,
Binnorie, O Binnorie!
Was 'Woe to my sister, false Helen!'
By the bonny mill-dams of Binnorie."

[1] A large number of these stories has been abstracted and commented on by M. Eugène Monseur, i. *Bulletin de F.L.*, 89, to whose accurate and scholarly paper the reader is referred. See also Grimm, ii. *Tales*, 538; Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco, 9; Ellis, *Yoruba*, 134.

"According to all complete and uncorrupted forms of the ballad," says Professor Child, comparing not only British examples, but also a large number from Denmark, Scandinavia, Iceland and the Färoe Islands, "either some part of the body of the drowned girl is taken to furnish a musical instrument, a harp or a viol, or the instrument is wholly made from the body." And he suggests that the original conception was the simple and beautiful one found in several variants, that the king's harper, or the girl's lover, takes three locks of her yellow hair to string his harp with. I venture to think he is wrong. The tradition supplied by the singer of one of the Swedish versions, though lost from the ballad itself, is much nearer the mark in relating that the drowned maiden floated ashore and grew up into a lime-tree, from whose wood the harp was made. As a matter of art it may be that, as Professor Child goes on to remark, "the restoration of the younger sister, like all good endings foisted on tragedies, emasculates the story." But art is a slow growth, a growth of civilisation, and this tragedy is an ancient, a barbarous tale. Here the good ending has not been foisted on. It is of the very essence and primitive matter of the plot. It is not found in the more modern and cultured versions, but in the ruder and more archaic. It does not occur once in England and Scotland, where the influence of culture has been most decisive.[1]

Without tarrying to discuss these ballads any further, let me refer briefly to three variants of an unmistakably antiquated character collected among the Santal aborigines of Bengal. In one of them the maiden is drowned by her seven brothers' wives. She reappears as a bamboo growing

[1] i. Child, 118.

on the embankment of the tank where she had lost her life. Out of the bamboo a fiddle is made which, when played, seems to wail as in bitter anguish, and moves the hearers to tears. It is acquired by a village chief. In the absence of the household the maiden comes out of it and prepares the family meal. The chief's son watches, discovers and marries her. A second version relates that the maiden was given by her brothers to the water-spirit to obtain water in a tank they had made. Right in the middle of the tank where she was drowned there sprang up an upel-flower, the purple sheen of which filled the beholder with delight. The bridegroom, to whom she had been betrothed previously to her sacrifice, comes to claim his bride, and gathers the flower. Ere the bridal procession reaches the bridegroom's dwelling on its return, the flower has become the bride. The third version is more striking still. Here the heroine was eaten by a monkey. The monkey died, and from the place where his body decayed a gourd sprang and grew, and bore a fruit. A banjo was made of this gourd, which emitted wonderful music and sang the maiden's fate. Her sister, the rani, cheated the minstrel out of the instrument and hid it in her own room. There the maiden, coming out, was discovered by the rajah, her sister's husband; and matters were arranged more happily than in the Scottish ballad, by the two sisters' sharing one spouse.[1]

In most of the cases we have dealt with, the metamor-

[1] Campbell, *Santal F. T.*, 52, 106, 102. In a Basuto tale a mother, irritated by her daughter, commits a deadly assault upon her, and beats her body to dust. The wind of the desert carries the dust away to a lake, where a crocodile makes of it a woman to live with him in the lake. From time to time she comes up to the surface and calls to her sister, chanting the story of her wrongs. Casalis, 360.

phoses undergone by the hero or heroine are, as in the Egyptian tale, stages of a contest. A curious example, where the contest is between a *mbulu*, or supernatural female, and a woman, is given in a Zulu tale. The *mbulu* was found out and put to death. From the spot where she was buried a pumpkin came up and tried to kill the child of the woman who had married the *mbulu's* husband. But the people chopped the pumpkin into pieces, burned them and threw the ashes into the river, so that nothing more could come of that *mbulu*.[1] In the Russian story of *The Fiend*, the struggle is with a supernatural being over whose personality Christianity has thrown a deeper tint of horror. The heroine, having fallen under the Fiend's power, dies. By her directions and her wise old grandmother's advice, her body is not carried out through the doorway, but (according to an old custom, the object of which was to prevent the dead from finding the way back) by a hole dug under the threshold, and is buried at a crossway. A wondrous flower arises from the spot. Taken home by a young lord and placed in a flower-pot, the blossom falls at night from its stem and turns into a lovely maiden, whom of course the nobleman weds.[2]

The stories cited in previous chapters of the hermit burnt to death and then born anew from a girl who eats, or smells, his heart, or some other portion of his body, are unconnected with a contest. So is the Eskimo tale of the young woman who was caught by a whale. After living with him some time she fled and lived with the seals in the form of a seal. In that shape she was harpooned by a man and cut to pieces. Her head was taken home and thrown beneath the bench, whence she slipped into the womb of

[1] Theal, 138. [2] Ralston, *Russian F. T.*, 10, from Afanasief.

the man's wife and was born anew. The name she received in this fresh birth was her old and euphonious name of Avigiatsiak.[1] A Tjame tale speaks of a youth who dies of hopeless love of a princess. Before his death he begs his mother, as soon as he has yielded up the ghost, to take out his liver, dry it and preserve it in a box. The king is attacked with a disease of the eyes, and is advised by his astrologers to steep the dried liver of a man in water and bathe his eyes with it. The lover's is the only one to be procured. In bathing his eyes with the water the king observes a little babe playing in the basin. He calls his daughters to look at it; and it draws the youngest of them, the object of the dead man's love, into the basin, where she disappears. Recourse is had again to the astrologers, who on consulting the lots discover the history of the dead lover and the cause of the princess' disappearance. In the end, as the astrologers predict, the king's wife bears a boy, who is no other than the lover born again, and his first mother bears a girl. When they grow up the king marries them; and on his death the boy becomes king.[2] Numerous Chinese tales are founded on the same superstition. In one, a man on dying contrives to avoid drinking the oblivious potion to which all the dead are condemned, and thus remembers his transformations. For his crimes he is next born as a horse, then as a puppy, afterwards as a snake, and lastly as a human being once more.[3] In another, the son of the Thunder-god takes a man for a trip among the clouds. In the course of his adventures he manages to steal a small star, which he brings back with him to the earth. By day it looked an ordinary, dull stone, but at

[1] Rink, 450.

[2] Landes, *Tjames*, 77.

[3] ii. Giles, 207. See also *ibid.*, 119, 267, 279.

night it became brilliant and lighted up the house. One evening it began to flit about like a fire-fly, and finally entered his wife's mouth and went down her throat. That night the husband dreamed that an old friend long dead appeared to him, and said: "I am the Shao-wei star. Your friendship is still cherished by me, and now you have brought me back from the sky. Truly our destinies are knitted together, and I will repay your kindness by becoming your son." His wife afterwards bore him a boy.[1]

A favourite theme in Western folk-song, a theme also known as far away as China, is that of the lovers, brought, like Tristram and Isolte, to a tragic end, from whose graves two trees grow and intertwine their branches, as if they joined in a lasting embrace. It is obvious that the trees are merely the lovers transformed. Some of the variants in ballad or *märchen* make this clear. Such is the ballad of Count Nello of Portugal. The hero there falls in love with the Infanta. But her father opposes the match, and cuts off the lover's head. The Infanta then dies, and is buried before the altar, while her lover is laid near the church-porch. On the one grave sprouts a cypress, on the other an orange-tree; and their branches unite. The king orders them to be cut down. Blood flows from the cuts; and from the one tree flies forth a dove and from the other a wood-pigeon.[2] So in the Highland story of Deirdre the lovers are buried on either side of a loch. A fir-shoot grows out of either grave, and they unite in a knot above the loch. Twice the king orders them to be cut down, and twice they grow again. The third time they are allowed to shoot forth and unite in peace.[3]

[1] i. Giles, 413. [2] Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco, 24.
[3] Jacobs, *Celtic F.T.*, 82, from xiii. *Celtic Mag.*, 69. An Irish

But this theme is found not only in *märchen* and ballad. It is not less frequent in saga. In Kurdestan were shown the graves of two lovers, renowned in Kurdish story, which were, in the sixteenth century, if we may believe the native writer Ahmed Khain of Bayazid, a place of pilgrimage. On each of the graves grew a rose-tree, whose branches entwined themselves together in token, as we are told, of love.[1] In Germany many tales are told of white lilies growing in sign of innocence and purity out of graves. Zingerle cites, among others, the case of William of Montpellier, from whose mouth sprang a lily wherein the words *Ave Maria* were to be read. From the grave of Saint Andrew of Rinn in the Tirol a snow-white lily also appeared, on whose leaves, as they opened, letters were seen. It was plucked by a boy before the letters could be read; and the deed cost his family dear, for few of them there were who did not come to a violent or a premature end.[2] In Pomerania, a lad who learned with difficulty, and only succeeded in remembering the words "Our Father who art in heaven," died unconfirmed. The commune would not permit his burial in consecrated earth, so he was laid outside the churchyard, close to the fence. Out of his tomb arose a beautiful white lily, bearing plainly to be read the words "Our Father who art in heaven." On digging, it was found to be rooted in his heart. Near Wollin, on the road to Poblotz, is a spot covered with dog-roses, where, years

form of this story, manifestly later in its present form, derives the interlacing trees from stakes of yew passed through the bodies of the lovers when they were buried. Gaidoz, in iv. *Mélusine*, 12, citing *Transactions of the Gaelic Soc.*, 1808.

[1] W. Spottiswoode, in ii. *Trans. Ethnol. Soc.*, *N.S.*, 248. See for other examples iv. and v. *Mélusine*, *passim*.

[2] Zingerle, *Sagen*, 136.

ago, a woman was burnt as a witch and her remains buried. Before the end came to her sufferings she said: "If I be a witch, thorns will grow on my grave; if not, then roses."[1] Space does not admit of our following the tale in this shape through all the countries of Europe; and it is needless. We may turn instead to note a few analogous superstitions elsewhere. Among the Kirghiz every one on whose grave a tree spontaneously grows is deemed a saint; while among the Gallas of Abyssinia wood that has been burning a little is placed upon the grave after the funeral, and if it grow it is taken as a sign that the dead man is happy.[2] The Santals believe that good men enter into fruit-bearing trees.[3] In the Molucca Islands there is a tree which bears during the night, from sunset to sunrise, a rapid succession of fragrant white flowers. To account for this phenomenon the inhabitants of Ternate have a tradition that there was once a beautiful woman who was beloved by the sun, and who, being deserted by her fickle lover, slew herself. Her body was, in accordance with the custom of the country, burnt; and from her ashes arose the tree, called by the early Portuguese voyagers the Tree of Sorrow.[4] The legend current among the inhabitants of Nias, an island off the coast of Sumatra, to account for the origin of the cocoa-nut-tree, relates that Halu hada, a supernatural being, one

[1] i. *Blätt. f. Pomm. Volksk.*, 17. Other instances are cited there. Among the peasantry of the Riviera, thorns or nettles growing on a grave are a sign of the damnation of the dead; if other plants grow, he is happy; if a mixture, he is in purgatory. J. B. Andrews, in ix. *Rev. Trad. Pop.*, 117.

[2] Featherman, *Tur.*, 269; i. Macdonald, 229, citing Krapf.

[3] Hunter, *Rural Bengal*, 210.

[4] ix. *Rev. Trad. Pop.*, 75, quoting Argensola, *Histoire de la Conquête des Isles Moluques* (Amsterdam, 1706).

day sneezed so violently that he sneezed his head off. It fell to earth, and, being covered up, the precious tree, indispensable to man, sprang from the spot.[1] A German practice is manifestly a relic of a belief similar to that recorded in these tales and superstitions. If a farmer have several times a foal or calf die, he buries one of them in the garden, planting a young willow in its mouth. When the tree grows up it is never polled or lopped, but is allowed to grow its own way, and is believed to guard the farm from future casualties of the same kind.[2]

But though the identity of the tree with the dead man, or as in the last-cited custom with the animal, is clear in all these traditions, it is not precisely affirmed as would seem to be the case with the story of the pomegranate referred to a few pages back, or with an Arab *märchen* from Tunis, in which a vine grows up from the very place where the blood of a murdered man had flowed. The murderer finds one enormous bunch of grapes upon it, although the season of grapes is not yet. Struck with its beauty, as well as with the uncommon occurrence, he takes the bunch to the sultan. On opening the basket the sultan found no grapes, but a man's head freshly cut off, dropping with blood. The murderer, horror-stricken, confessed his crime, and was summarily executed.[3] Thus too in Ojibway legends, reproduced by Longfellow, that mysterious being

> ". . . the young Mondamin,
> With his soft and shining tresses,
> With his garments green and yellow,
> With his long and glossy plumage,"

came and wrestled thrice with one of their heroes. The

[1] Modigliani, 618. [2] Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 1811.
[3] viii. *Rev. Trad. Pop.*, 279.

third time the Ojibway was victorious. His antagonist was overthrown, killed and buried. The victor watched the grave,

> "Kept the dark mould soft above it,
> Kept it clean from weeds and insects,
> Drove away with scoffs and shoutings
> Kahgahgee, the king of ravens.
> Till at length a small green feather
> From the earth shot slowly upward,
> Then another and another,
> And before the summer ended
> Stood the maize in all its beauty,
> With its shining robes about it,
> And its long, soft, yellow tresses;
> And in rapture Hiawatha
> Cried aloud: 'It is Mondamin!
> Yes, the friend of man, Mondamin!'"

The Brazilians have a parallel tradition about the manioc. It was a maiden who died, and, being buried in her mother's house, grew up as a plant, flourished and bore fruit.[1] Among some tribes of Kaffirs, when twins are born they are examined, and the one appearing the more delicate is suffocated by placing a clod of earth in its mouth. When dead, it is buried near the doorway of the hut, and a dwarf aloe is planted over the grave. "The aloe is regarded in some way as the living representative of the dead infant; its spirit or shade is supposed to be in it, or to be hovering about it. When it is planted, its spines are carefully cut away that the survivor may play about it, and drag himself up by it, and make himself strong, as he would have done with his fellow-twin had he been permitted to live."[2] It

[1] Dorman, 293, citing Smith's *Brazil*; Von den Steinen, 369.

[2] Callaway, in iv. *Journ. Anthr. Soc.*, cxxxviii.

would be difficult to find a practice which would better explain that of the German farmer with his dead calf.

In classical legends we meet everywhere cases of transformation, either before or after death, of men and women into trees or plants, or into some of the lower animals. The most famous case, and one which has recently been submitted to careful examination by two distinguished living anthropologists, is that of Attis, who was changed into a pine-tree and in that form worshipped. It would be impertinent in me, after the acute and exhaustive discussions by Mr. Frazer and Mr. Grant Allen, to occupy any space with the consideration either of the legend or the cult. I only refer to them in this place as an illustration of ancient belief in metamorphosis, and for the purpose of recalling the reader's attention to its identity with the superstitions of savage tribes, as well as those preserved in modern folklore, which we are now reviewing. The cult of Attis may not have been based, as Mr. Grant Allen thinks, on the worship of a dead man. "The tree-spirit and the corn-spirit, like most other deities," may not "originate in the ghost of the deified ancestor."[1] We need not go the length of Mr. Herbert Spencer's Euhemerism; on the contrary, we may regard it as a child (one among many) of his passion for explaining everything quite clearly, for stopping up all gaps and stubbing up all difficulties in his synthesis, rather than an all-sufficient account of the beginnings of religion. It is certain, however, that the legend as we have it, the worship as it is recorded for us, implied a belief in metamorphosis as a possible and actual occurrence consequent upon death. This belief had descended to

[1] Grant Allen, *Attis*, 33, and *passim*. See also Frazer, *Golden Bough*, *passim*; Böttticher, 254 *seqq*.

classic times from savagery, for to the savage mind death very often is merely metamorphosis. Nor, as we have seen, is the metamorphosis confined to vegetable forms. The pious Æneas beheld his father Anchises in a snake that crept from his tomb. The Zulu, not less pious, beholds his father in a snake lurking about his kraal.[1] The ancient Egyptians held that the souls of the departed could assume animal forms.[2] The Yorubas think the souls of the dead are sometimes born again in animals, or, though more rarely, in plants.[3] In the East Indies, a Dyak who dies by accident, as by drowning, is not buried, but carried into the forest and simply laid down there. It is believed that his soul enters a tree, a fish, or some other brute. Accordingly certain kinds, of fish are not eaten, and certain kinds of wood are not used, because they willingly harbour souls. On the other hand, the soul of a man over whom all proper funeral rites have been performed enters the City of Souls. But it cannot abide there for ever. After a life seven times as long as on the earth it dies and returns to this world, where it enters a mushroom, a fruit or a leaf, in the hope that it may be eaten by a human being or one of the lower animals. In such case the deceased is born again in the next offspring of the living creature which has eaten it; otherwise he comes to an end.[4] The inhabitants of Nias believe that the soul at death divides into three parts. One of them goes to the village of the dead, and there often takes brute-form. Thus murderers become grasshoppers, those who die without male issue become

[1] Callaway, *Rel. Syst.*, 140.
[2] Le Page Renouf, in xvi. *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, 100.
[3] Ellis, *Yoruba*, 133, 134.
[4] Grabowsky, in ii. *Internat. Archiv.*, 181, 187.

night-flying moths, old men become hogs, and young children earthworms. Another part, called the *chèha*, must be received in his mouth by the son of the dying person from the mouth of the latter, else it turns into a small animal and lingers about the body until search be made for it. When found, it is safely conveyed into a statuette representing the deceased.[1] The natives of Ugi, in the Solomon Islands, believe that the souls of the dead pass into fireflies.[2] The Moquis of North America maintained that death was nothing but a process of transmutation, and that the body was changed into animals, plants, and inanimate objects.[3] The medicine men and women of the Sioux, it was believed, might be changed after death into wild beasts.[4] Among the Gallinomero of California bad men were thought to return in the shape of coyotes, just as the Buddhist population of Ladak hold that a malicious person is reincarnated as a marmot.[5] A Tirolese tale exhibits the shapes even yet believed over a wide extent of Christendom to be assumed by guilty and by innocent souls. For many years, it is said, a large toad haunted the steps of a vaulted grave at Meran. Flung away it was, and killed it was; but the next Ember Day there it would be sitting again upon the steps. At last a pious woman guessed that it was a poor soul, and spoke to it, asking what were the conditions of its deliverance. They were hard, but she fulfilled them; and as soon as atonement was made the toad changed into a dove, white as a stainless flower, and

[1] Modigliani, 292, 277, 290, 293, 479. Is it too much to say that the Greek custom whereby the nearest relative received the dying breath in a kiss probably originated in a similar belief?

[2] Guppy, 54.

[3] Featherman, *Aoneo-Mar.*, 236.

[4] Bourke, in ix. *Rep. Bur. Ethn.*, 470, quoting Schultze, in *Smithsonian Report* for 1867.

[5] Powers, 182; Knight, 109.

flew up before its deliverer's eyes into heaven.[1] The numerous British legends of ghost-laying, in which the dead unquiet soul appears as a bull, a black dog, a toad, a fly, or what not, recur to the mind in this connection. The beast that is, after a struggle, imprisoned by the parson, or some other conjurer, in a boot, a snuff-box, or a bottle, or bricked up in the haunted chamber, is only the changed form of a once living man or woman. But the superstition as thus presented has been so often and so well commented on, that it is needless to illustrate it further.

We can now understand the Bulgarian ballad cited in Chapter IV., containing the pathetic narrative of the hyacinths growing out of the dead man's grave and causing his mother to give birth to another son. The flowers were a new manifestation of the youth who had been untimely slain; and by them he entered again into his mother's womb and was born. This and others of the tales referred to in the same chapter and that which follows it are parallel with the tale of *The Two Brothers* in the transformations they present. And both they and many of the practices detailed in the last chapter point very clearly to the belief that a dead person can be born again, if only the right means be taken for that end.

All our illustrations of the doctrine of Transformation have been drawn from cases where the hero is conceived as having begun his career in human shape, whether as man or deity, save in the one instance of the Annamite story of *Posthumous Revenge*. There his pristine figure was an eel. But if the power of metamorphosis be such that human beings can be changed by means of death

[1] Zingerle, *Sagen*, 137. Other examples on the following pages. Breton examples may be found in Le Braz, 122, 132, 270, 272, 417.

and a fresh birth into brute and vegetable form, brutes and vegetables may equally be changed by the same agency into human beings. The *märchen* of *The King of the Fishes* displays this power. In the light of the transmutations we have passed in review, it is abundantly evident that the fisherman's sons, their horses, dogs and life-tokens, are nothing more nor less than the ancestor-fish in a new mould. In previous chapters we have examined cases in which men and women deceased have been held to reappear as human babes without undergoing any intermediate change into lower forms; and we have others yet to examine. What is expressly affirmed in tales where pregnancy is caused by tasting the ashes of a corpse, what is implicit in the disgusting superstitions which lead women to swallow portions of dead bodies, must also be understood in the parallel cases where fishes and fruit are eaten and result in the production of children. Here then we have the real meaning of the tales and superstitions considered in the last three chapters. At their root lies the belief in Transformation. Flowers, fruit, and other vegetables, eggs, fishes, spiders, worms, and even stones, are all capable of becoming human beings. They only await absorption in the shape of food, or in some other appropriate manner, into the body of a woman, to enable the metamorphosis to be accomplished. In some cases, as where drugs and other compounds are used, or where water or sunbeams are the fructifying power, this meaning has been forgotten. The virtue of such means is usually imputed to magical or divine power. But this does not appear to be the original belief. The original belief is intimately bound up with the savage theory of the universe. In that theory no strict line of cleavage runs across Nature. All things may change their

shape, some at will, others on the fulfilment of certain conditions, whereof death, as applying to all animal and vegetable life, is perhaps the most usual. Most of the instances of death and new birth we have yet to deal with have little apparent relation to this point. But, so far as they add to the general evidence as to the reappearance of the dead in fresh births, even the least relevant of them are not without value.

According to the classical mythology, when Orion's two daughters sacrificed themselves for Thebes, two young men sprang from their ashes. Ovid describes the goblet presented by Anius, the priest-king of Delos, to Æneas, as carved with a representation of the scene:

> "Out of their maiden embers, lo! twin youths,
> Lest the race fail, arise, Coronæ named,
> And lead the funeral pomp."[1]

Although the poet speaks of the devoted virgins as their mothers, we shall probably not be far wrong in conjecturing that the youths were originally regarded as new and worthier manifestations of the maidens whose virile courage had not hesitated at self-inflicted death, in pursuance of the oracle, to save their devoted city from the plague. However this may be, elsewhere we frequently find stories of men who have died and been born again. The Mogul emperor Akbar is said to have declared that he had formerly been a Brumhuchari, named Mukundu. Worldly desires were excited in his mind by cow's hairs in some milk which he had drunk; and he began to long for wisdom and greatness. The pipul-tree under which he was sitting had the power of granting any wish. Therefore, laying hold of it, he

[1] Ovid, *Metam.*, xiii. 697.

renounced life in Gunga, and reappeared as Akbar.[1] A Mongolian tale relates that Shêduir Van, a Khotogait prince, having been guilty of plotting insurrection against the emperor of China, was caught and condemned to execution. Before being beheaded, he said: "I am to be executed; but that is no misfortune; my soul shall enter the womb of the emperor's wife." The empress accordingly gave birth to a son, who had a cicatrice on the neck. The wise men advised the emperor that the soul of Shêduir Van had entered her womb. The child was therefore destroyed. The empress conceived once more, and bore a son with a scar. The emperor, again advised by his wise men that this was the soul of Shêduir Van, ordered the babe to be thrown into the fire; but the charcoal went out and changed into water. After this, we are told that the soul of Shêduir Van did not again enter the empress' womb, but revealed itself as a hairless bay mare, whose hide is preserved to the present day.[2]

Like the story of the great monarch Akbar, that of Shêduir Van has probably been influenced by Buddhistic thought. But in both cases the influence would be that of Buddhistic thought only as popularly understood. The common people of India, we may safely assume—still less the tribes of Tibet and the practical Chinese — never absorbed into their minds the abstract doctrines of Karma and the Skandhas. It is, indeed, more than doubtful whether these philosophical speculations have ever penetrated the intellects of the greatest doctors of the Northern Church. The current belief is illustrated in the Chinese tales I have quoted. Even more strikingly is it exempli-

[1] Southey, ii. *Commonplace Bk.*, 435, quoting Ward, i. *Hindoos*, 54.
[2] Gardner, in iv. *F.L. Journ.*, 30.

fied in the successive incarnations which provide a perpetual succession of Grand Lamas at Lhasa, and of skooshoks for minor monasteries. While as to the Southern Church, we are not dependent for our assumption upon the folklore and the general culture of the Cingalese and the peoples of Further India. In the *Játakas*, or parables attributed to Gautama, we have irrefragable witness of the teaching current from a very early period in Buddhist history. They are apologues, most of them probably of much older date, which have acquired sacredness by being fitted to alleged events in the ministry of the Buddha. The Master is represented as taking occasion, from some remark made by his disciples upon a passing occurrence, to declare that in a former birth the same things had happened to them; and in illustration of his statement he tells the tale. The following may stand for a typical conclusion or application. It is that of the parable of the cruel crane outwitted by the crab: "When the Teacher had finished this discourse showing that 'Not now only, O mendicants, has this man been outwitted by the country robe-maker, long ago he was outwitted in the same way,' he established the connection, and summed up the Játaka, by saying, 'At that time he [the crane] was the Jetavana robe-maker, the crab was the country robe-maker, but the Genius of the Tree was I myself.'" To the personages of the tale is thus ascribed complete identity with the Buddha and his contemporaries. Transmigration, in short, as conceived in popular Buddhism, was no product of the subtleties of Hindu metaphysics. It was no refined philosophical doctrine. It is undiscoverable in the *Rig-Veda*, the earliest sacred book of the Sanskrit-speaking conquerors of India. Its ethical value, even, if we may judge from the *Játakas*, was of the smallest. Such as it was, Transmigration

was a direct evolution of the more savage belief in Transformation, as we have seen that belief exemplified in the present chapter, and hardly distinguishable from it, either in its terms or in its consequences.

Far in the west the Celts are reported to have held the dogma of Transmigration. This report, coming to us from writers imbued with Greco-Roman philosophy, and interpreting, according to the custom of classical antiquity, the religions of barbarous races in the terms of their own, has been understood to imply an elaborate philosophical system such as those of Pythagoras and Buddha. That the Celts had imbibed Buddhist theories we cannot suppose. The doctrines of Pythagoras may, indeed, have penetrated into Gaul by commercial routes or by contact with Greek colonies. Yet, if they did, it is strange that no other vestige of the Pythagorean philosophy is imputed to the Celts, and that the Druidical religion, whereof we are told the dogma in question was part, blossomed, as it is said to have done, most perfectly in Britain, where it was furthest removed from all foreign influences. We know directly little concerning Druidism. Our knowledge, as far as it goes, leads us to think the religion of the ancient Britons and Gauls was of the same general character as other barbarous cults. Arising thus from the common ground of savagery, there is no reason why Celtic opinion may not have begun to develop in the same direction as popular Buddhism. Neither Celtic mythology, however, as known to us, nor Celtic folklore, as reported by mediæval and modern writers, affords ground for supposing that metempsychosis in any philosophical sense was part of the ancient Celtic creed. In touching, a few pages back, on Barguests, as ghosts in animal mould are technically called, we disposed

of the most salient point of modern Celtic folklore, for we found it to be an expression, in no way divergent from that of other uncultivated peoples, of the universal doctrine of Transformation. We shall now briefly discuss the examples to be found in what remains to us of the ancient mythology.

The story of Taliessin, though only found in a manuscript of the seventeenth century, comes, it is generally conceded, within this category; for its coincidences with the older Celtic traditions are too striking to allow of any other explanation. Ceridwen, the wife of Tegid the Bald, had, among other children, a son of such extreme ugliness that she thought he was not likely to be admitted amongst men of noble birth unless he had some exalted merits or knowledge. So she undertook, with the aid of the books of Fferyll—that is to say, Vergil the Magician, a character which Vergil the poet is made to sustain in mediæval tradition—to boil a caldron of Inspiration and Science for his benefit. Now, this caldron required to be boiled for a year and a day; at the end of which time three precious drops would be obtained, the rest of its contents being poisonous, and indeed highly explosive. The caldron was placed in charge of Gwion the Little and a blind man named Mordav, while Ceridwen herself went to gather herbs of virtue. But before the expiration of the year and a day the three precious drops flew out of the caldron and fell upon Gwion's finger, which he instinctively put to his mouth to allay the scalding. He at once became possessed of all knowledge, and foresaw his danger from Ceridwen's rage when she found her preparations had been in vain. He, therefore, fled, hotly pursued by the witch. To elude her he changed into a hare, whereupon she took the shape

of a greyhound. He ran towards the river, and became a fish, to chase which she assumed the form of an otter. Gwion then flew up as a bird. He soon found himself followed by a hawk, which was no other than his enemy; and just as she was about to stoop upon him he dropped among a heap of winnowed wheat on the floor of a barn, and turned himself into one of the grains. From a hawk to a black hen the transformation was easy; and Ceridwen thus pecked up the grain in question and swallowed it. She became by this means pregnant, and gave birth to a beautiful boy—a new manifestation of Gwion the Little; and when he was born she wrapped him up in a hide and cast him into the sea, by which he was ultimately thrown upon the weir of Gwyddno. From thence he was rescued to become the king of the bards, Taliessin.[1] Two poems attributed to Taliessin enumerate many more metamorphoses than are mentioned in the tale. The exact date of these poems is, in the present state of Welsh scholarship, unascertainable; but they are certainly not later than the fourteenth century. One of them speaks of the poet's original country as the region of the summer stars, and identifies him with Merlin and other sages and bards. Confining our attention, however, to the narrative, we may lay aside the earlier changes as links of a chain of incidents common in fairy-tales, and known technically as the Transformation-fight. An example of it familiar to every reader is the contest between the princess and the Jinn in the story of the Second Calender in the *Arabian Nights*. These changes are not effected by death and birth as are the ones we are considering now. In the final

[1] *Mabinogion*, 471. Cf. Prof. Rhys' exposition of the story, *Hibbert Lectures*, 543.

change, on the other hand, Gwion is devoured by the witch and reproduced as her son, just as Bata is swallowed in the shape of a splinter of the persea-tree by the king's Favourite, and born again of her, to become her destruction.

So far the Welsh mythology: a parallel instance is afforded by the Erse. Both have suffered from the Euhemerism of the Middle Ages that has preserved them for us; but the true lines of the tales are not too far obliterated for our present purpose. The story of Tuan mac Cairill, then, as we find it embalmed in the Irish chronicles, makes him the sole survivor of the band of Partholon, who first colonised the island after the Deluge. Fallen into decrepitude after many years, he saw a new immigration led by Nemed, flying from which he fasted three days, lay down to sleep and was changed into a stag. Again he fell into old age, fasted, and was metamorphosed into a wild boar. Meanwhile, the descendants of Nemed had all died out. Semion, then, the ancestor of the three tribes of the Fir Domnann, the Fir Bolg and the Galiûin, established himself in the land. After a time the process was repeated, and Tuan became a great sea-eagle. Beothach, from whom descended the Tuatha De Danann, seized the island, and afterwards the sons of Mile, whose descendants are the living race. The sea-eagle found himself in the hole of a tree on the bank of a river. There he fasted nine days, and, sleeping, awoke as a salmon in the stream. For a long time he escaped the fishermen's nets; at last he was caught and carried to the wife of Carell, king of that district. She saw the fish, longed for it, cooked it, and ate it up. But this was far from being the end of Tuan. From her he was born again,

wise man and prophet, and was called Tuan, son of Carell He lived not only to be baptized at the coming of Saint Patrick, but to converse with Saint Columba, and to narrate the whole history of Ireland, as he remembered it during his various transformations, to Saint Finnen in the middle of the sixth century. All the ancient history, all the old genealogies rest upon his authority.[1]

Etain, another mythological figure of Ireland, had a somewhat similar adventure. She was one of the two wives of Mider, who belonged to the Tuatha De Danann. Oengus, son of the Dagde, and foster-son of Mider, carried her off, and she became his wife. Her first husband, however, had not ceased to remember her, and he sought if by any means he might recover her. His other wife, bent on frustrating him, and watching her opportunity, sent a wind that blew Etain out of the bower built for her by Oengus, and deposited her on the roof of a house where the lords of Ulster and their wives were engaged in a drinking-bout. Upon the table beneath stood a golden cup of beer beside one of the ladies. From the roof, by the opening which did duty for a chimney, Etain fell into the cup. The lady swallowed her unperceived in the next draught, and gave birth to her again after nine months. Thus Etain began a new life. She became the loveliest of Irish maidens, and wedded the supreme king Eochaid Airem, who reigned at Tara. But Mider had not yet ceased to love her. Disguised as a warrior, he sought the king and challenged him to a game of chess. When the board was set: "Play," said he to the king. "I do not play without stakes," replied the monarch. Mider, on his side, bet fifty

[1] D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Cycle Myth.*, 47, citing the *Leabhar na hUidhre* and two other MSS.

brown horses, large-breasted, with limbs slender and agile. "For my part," said the king, sure of success, "if I lose, I will pay what you like." They played; the king lost, and Mider demanded his wife. The king objected that he was entitled to his revenge; and his adversary, with a bad grace, yielded. A year passed, during which the king saw nothing of Mider; though he often appeared to Etain and wooed her, but without success; for she proved faithful to her husband. At the end of the year Mider came and claimed the second game. They played; again Eochaid lost, and Mider demanded to put his arms around Etain and give her a kiss. "Come back in a month," replied the king, "and it shall be granted you." When the fatal day arrived, his rival found Eochaid surrounded by his warriors, the fortress closed and guarded on every side. The day passed, and no antagonist presented himself. But at night Mider stood all at once in the midst of the hall, the beautiful Mider, more beautiful than ever. No one had seen him enter. The lady blushed when he boldly named his errand. "Do not blush," quoth Mider; "thou hast no reason to reproach thyself. For a whole year I have not ceased to woo thee with jewels and wealth—thee, the fairest of the women of Ireland; and thou hast refused to listen to me so long as thy husband gave thee no permission." "I have told thee," replied she, "that I will not follow thee, unless my husband yield me. I will only be taken if Eochaid give me to thee." "I will not give thee," cried the king. "I only consent that he put his arms around thee here in this hall, as has been agreed." "It shall be done," said Mider. Laying his lance in his left hand, he seized Etain with his right; and, rising in the air, he disappeared with her through the smoke-hole in

the palace-roof. The warriors that surrounded the king, ashamed at their own impotence, rushed from the hall to pursue the fugitives. They only saw, high above Tara, two swans whose long white necks were encircled and bound together by a yoke of gold. The story adds that afterwards, by the magical might of his Druids, Eochaid forced an entrance to the mysterious subterranean palace of Mider and took possession once more of his wife, so lovely, so beloved. But Mider's hate was one day revenged on the posterity of Eochaid and Etain by the tragic death of Conaire, their grandson.[1] The Druidical doctrine of metempsychosis would appear, alike from these ancient mythological tales and from modern folklore, to have been nothing more than Transformation as we find it among savages in all parts of the world.

Before turning to rites and superstitious beliefs, we may notice the legend of Oankoitupeh, son of the Red Cloud, the hero of the North American Maidus. A maiden sees a beautiful red cloud, and hears sweet music. The next day, while picking grass-seed pinole, she finds an arrow trimmed with yellow-hammer feathers; and suddenly a man is standing beside her, who is none other than the red cloud she had seen the day before. The bright and resplendent stranger declares his love; and the maiden replies: "If you love me, take and eat this basket of grass-seed pinole." He touches the basket, and its contents vanish. Thereupon the girl swoons. When she returns to consciousness, behold! she has given birth to a son. The Red Cloud tells her: "You love me now; that is my boy, but he is not of this world. . . . He shall be greater than

[1] *Ibid.*, 312. Finn mac Cumhail too had previously lived as Mongan. *Ibid.*, 337.

all men; he shall have power over all, and not fear any that live. Therefore shall his name be Oan-koi-tu-peh (the Invincible). Whenever you see him, think of me. This boy has no life apart from me; he is myself."[1] Compare with this the statement concerning Cuchulainn, one of the epic heroes of Ireland. It will be recollected that he was a new birth of the god Lug. The great epic cycles took final shape after the wars with the Danes in the eleventh century. One of the manuscripts of that period relates that the men of Ulster took counsel about Cuchulainn, because they were troubled and afraid that he would perish early, "so for that reason they wished to give him a wife that he might leave an heir; for they knew that his re-birth would be of himself."[2]

These passages, though related of more than common men, point to a belief shared by the ancient Irish with the ancient Californians, that the son is in some sense identical with his father—a new birth, a new manifestation of the same person. This curious belief finds categorical expression in the great Brahman compilation known as the *Laws of Manu*. There we are told: "The husband, after conception by his wife, becomes an embryo and is born again of her; for that is the wifehood of a wife, that he is born again by her."[3] Corresponding with this declaration, the ritual prescribes, among other ceremonies when a boy is born, that the husband should address the babe thus: "From limb by limb thou art produced; and of the heart thou art born. Thou indeed art the self (*atman*) called son; so live a hundred autumns." In the

[1] Powers, *Tribes of California*, iii. *Contrib. N. Amer. Ethn.*, 299.

[2] *The Wooing of Emer*, translated by Prof. Kuno Meyer, i. *Arch. Rev.*, 70.

[3] xxv. *Sacred Bks.*, 329.

same words he addresses the boy every time he himself returns from a journey, embracing his head and kissing him thrice.[1]

Traces of the notion that a child is neither more nor less than the reappearance of an ancestor are found almost all over the world. It seems to be a general opinion among the Negroes of the western coasts of Africa that the ghostly self of a dead man enters the body of a newborn babe belonging to the same family. In Guinea, and among the Wanika, the resemblance, physical or mental, borne by a child to its father is attributed to this cause. The Yorubas inquire of their family god which of the deceased ancestors has returned, in order to name the child accordingly; and they greet its birth with the words "Thou art come!" as if addressing some one who has returned.[2] On the Gold Coast, parents who have lost several children sometimes cast into the bush the body of the infant who has last died. They believe the next born to be the same child returned; and if it have any congenital deformity or defect, that is attributed to injuries received from wild beasts or other evil influences in the jungle.[3] Caution, however, is required

[1] *Grihya-Sûtra* of Hiranyakesin, xxx. *Sacred Bks.*, 211. *Grihya-Sûtra* of Âsvalâyana, xxix. *Sacred Bks.*, 183. Chinese ritual, in its insistence on the necessity of personation of the dead at solemn sacrifices by his grandson, or some one else of the same surname, points to the same doctrine. See especially The *Lî*-K*î*, xxvii. *Sacred Bks.*, 337; xxviii. 243.

[2] Featherman, *Nigritians*, 447; Tylor, ii. *Prim. Cul.*, 4; *Winwood Reade*, 539; Ploss, i. *Kind*, 259, citing Bastian. Ellis, *Yoruba*, 128, says the inquiry is made of a priest of Ifa, the god of divination. It is believed by one of the Ewe tribes, neighbours of the Yoruba, that the lower jaw is the only part of the body which a child derives from its mother, all the rest being from the ancestral *luwoo* or *kra*. The father furnishes nothing. *Ibid.* 131 note.

[3] Burton, ii. *Wanderings*, 174.

in dealing with some of these cases, for the subtlety of savage metaphysics is marvellous. An acute observer points out that among the Tshi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast and the Ewe-speaking tribes of the Slave Coast, a distinction is drawn between the ghostly self that continues the man's existence after death in the spirit-world, and his *kra* or *ñoli*, which is capable of being born again in a new human body. In the eastern Ewe districts and in Dahome the soul is, by either an inconsistency or a subtlety, believed to remain in the land of the dead and to animate some new child of the family at one and the same time; but it never animates an embryo in a strange family.[1] Not very different seems to be the opinion of the Khonds of Orissa. Anthropologists have often quoted Macpherson's description of the divination for determining a child's name. The priest drops grains of rice into a cup of water, naming with each grain a deceased ancestor. From the movements of the seed in the fluid, and from observations made on the infant's person, he pronounces which of the progenitors has reappeared in it; and the babe is usually named accordingly. Khond psychology endows every one with four souls. Out of such a company there is no difficulty in arranging that one of them shall be attached to some tribe and perpetually born again into it. This, in fact, is what is believed to happen.[2]

In New Zealand the priest, after certain ceremonies, first recited to the child the following stave:

[1] Ellis, *Tshi-speaking Peoples*, 149; *Ewe-speaking Peoples*, 114; Burton, ii. *Gelele*, 158; ii. *Wanderings*, 173.

[2] Macpherson, *Memorials*, 72, 92, 134. But see as to the Kols, who perform a similar ceremony without the same ancestral reference, Dalton, 295.

"Wait till I pronounce your name.
What is your name?
Listen to your name,
This is your name——"

Then followed strings of ancestral names, until the babe sneezed. The name being uttered at the moment of the sneeze was the one chosen.[1] We are not expressly told that the object of this rite was to identify the child with one of his forefathers. But, as Dr. Tylor remarks, we may always suspect it in such a case; and the verses seem to point to some such purpose. It was difficult to distinguish between gods and ancestors among the Maori,[2] as, in truth, it often is, if we may not use a stronger expression, among savage peoples. The worship of the kindred inhabitants of Samoa was totemistic. During the mother's labour, first the family god of the father, and then that of the mother was invoked. The god being invoked at the instant of birth was looked upon as the child's special *aitu* (Maori, *atua*) or god; and during infancy the child was called and actually named "*merda* of Tongo" or "of Satiā," or whatever other deity it might be.[3] This would seem to go a step beyond the Maori creed, and to indicate that at one time the child was identified with the totem-god. In the island of Aurora, New Hebrides, where the people are Melanesians, women often speak of a child as the *nunu*, or echo, of some dead person. Dr. Codrington says: "It is not a notion of metempsychosis, as if the soul of the dead person returned in the newborn child; but it is thought that there is so close a connection that the infant takes the place of the

[1] Tylor, 184. [2] *Ibid.*, 36.
[3] Turner, *Samoa*, 16, 77, 78; *Polynesia*, 174, 178, 238.

deceased."[1] We may set this explanation beside the statement quoted by Dr. Tylor from Charlevoix that "some North American Indians were observed to set the child in place of the last owner of its name, so that a man would treat as his grandfather a child who might have been his grandson."[2] Whatever may be the fact as regards the Melanesians, it is certain that North American tribes, like the Mengwe and the Thlinkits, believed in the new birth of the dead. Among the latter, if a pregnant woman dreamed of a dead man, it was said that the ghost had taken up its abode in her body; and if a newborn child had the least resemblance to a deceased relative, the latter was believed to have returned, and the child was called by his name.[3] Even in Norway, if a pregnant woman dream of one who is dead, the child must be named after him. If the dream be of a man, and a girl be born, the man's name must be feminised, and *vice versâ*. If she dream of more than one person, the names of all must be given.[4] The last practice perhaps resulted from the uncertainty as to which of the dead who appeared was to be identified with the coming stranger. Returning to America, we find that the Tacullies and Sicamies, tribes allied to the Thlinkits, inquire of the dead if they will return to life or not. The shaman inspects the naked breast of the body, and if satisfied on the point he blows the soul into the air, that it may seek a new body or puts his hands on the head of one of the mourners, thereby conveying the spirit into him, to be embodied in his next offspring. The relation thus favoured, we are

[1] xviii. *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, 311. [2] Tylor, ii. *Prim. Cul.*, 4.

[3] Featherman, *Aoneo-Mar.*, 31, 392; iii. Bancroft, 517. See also Tylor, ii. *Prim. Cul.*, 3; Niblack, in *Rep. Nat. Mus.* (1888), 369.

[4] Liebrecht, 311.

told, added the name of the deceased to his own.[1] It is said that the Dakotas believed that their medicine-men and women ran their career four times in human shape.[2] In the Amazons Valley the Ticunas, and yet further to the south the Bakaïrí and their allied tribes, name a child from one of its forefathers. In Southern India the same practice is followed by the Yenadies;[3] and, indeed, it may be said, whatever be its motive, to be a common practice in many parts of the globe. An Esthonian babe is baptized by the name of one of its grandfathers.[4] In the Romagna it is usual to give the names of grandfathers, uncles and other relatives, to children, but not the names of relatives who are living, lest their death be accelerated — a vague reminiscence probably of the real reason.[5] Elsewhere in Italy the superstition that a baby is a dead relative returned

[1] iii. Bancroft, 517. Did Bancroft read his authority aright? Tylor, citing Waitz, states that it was the child who bore not only the name but the rank of the deceased. I have preferred to cite Bancroft both because the statement is second-hand, instead of third-hand (I have no access to the original), and because it tells somewhat less strongly in favour of the argument.

[2] Bourke, in ix. *Rep. Bur. Ethn.*, 470, quoting Schultze, *Fetichism* (New York, 1885).

[3] iii. *Trans. Ethnol. Soc., N.S.*, 188, 375; Von den Steinen, 334, 434.

[4] Featherman, *Dravidians*, 491.

[5] Placucci, 78, 23. The reason, however, may be derived from the belief that to bestow the name is to bestow a part of the life of the original owner of the name, who would thus lose it. The same ambiguity attaches to a superstition in the province of Posen (Polish Prussia), where, if a child die and the next year another child be born, it must not receive the name of the dead child lest it also die. iii. *Zeits. f. Volksk.*, 233. This would seem to amount to complete identity, or else to some evil influence in the name, or perhaps to a mistake as to the identity on the part of some malicious spirit who had a spite against the dead child. At Chemnitz, if the first children take their

appears to be extant.[1] Among the Andaman islanders, "if a woman who has lost a baby be about to become a mother, the name borne by the deceased is bestowed on the fœtus, in the expectation that it will prove to be the same child born again. Should the infant at birth prove to be of the same sex as the one who had died, the identity would be considered sufficiently established."[2] The same belief was current among the people of Old Calabar.[3] Huron philosophy posited the existence of two souls in a man. One was changed into a turtle-dove, or went to the village of souls. The other remained attached to the body, never to leave it "unless some one gave birth to it again." The Hurons, moreover, as we have seen, buried in the road their little children who died, in order that they might secretly enter into the wombs of passing women, and be born again.[4] As to the beliefs of the Eskimo there seems a little question. As to their practice of naming children after deceased persons (either relatives or intimate friends) there is no doubt. Dr. Tylor cites from Crantz the assertion that a helpless widow would seek to persuade some father that the soul of a dead child of his had passed into a living child of hers, or *vice versâ*, thus gaining to herself a new relative and protector. Dr. Rink, on the other hand, considers that the deceased person whose name a child

parents' names they die before the parents. Grimm, *Teut. Myth.*, 1778. These cases want further inquiry. As to the renewal of family names by giving them to children, see Tylor, ii. *Prim. Cul.*, 4; Kaindl, 6; Finamore, *Trad. Pop. Abr.*, 74.

[1] Pigorini-Beri, 83.

[2] E. H. Man, in xii. *Journ. Anthr. Inst.*, 155.

[3] Burton, *Wit and Wisdom*, 376.

[4] *Relations des Jésuites* (1636), translated by Miss Nora Thomas, v. *Rep. Bur. Ethn.*, 114, 111.

bore was only looked upon as a kind of guardian spirit. His statement, however, that the child when grown up was bound to brave the influences that had caused his namesake's death—for instance, if the namesake had perished at sea, his successor had all the greater inducement to become a skilful kayaker—points to identity; and so do the stories I have cited from Rink's collection in previous pages.[1] It may be suggested that the discrepancy is to be accounted for by the gradual change in Eskimo ideas under contact with civilised travellers and missionaries.

We have now reviewed a large number of *märchen* wherein the hero or heroine is said to have suffered by death and new birth transfiguration into a variety of forms, both brute and human. We have, moreover, found the same plot in sagas in both hemispheres. And, advancing to savage theory and its correlative customs, I hope I have made it plain that stories of metamorphosis, whether *märchen* or sagas, have been founded upon the belief that at death men are not annihilated, but pass into fresh forms, sometimes appearing as plants and trees, sometimes as animals of the lower creation, and sometimes as men and women born again into their own kindred or among strangers. This is a creed held so widely that—though subject, perhaps, to varying stress, according to the degree and direction of the evolving civilisation, or, possibly yet more, to the different capacities and opportunities of travellers who report the characteristics of savage life and thought often far removed from their own—it may yet be regarded as practically universal. I have not attempted to distinguish

[1] Tylor, ii. *Prim. Cul.*, 3; i. Crantz, 161, 200; Rink, 44, 54, 64, 434; vi. *Rep. Bur. Ethn.*, 612. *Ante*, pp. 75, 196.

between Transformation and Transmigration. When a man, either without passing through death and birth, or passing through death only, changes into a wolf or an ant, it is no more than Transformation. But if the metamorphosis be effected by death and growth into a tree, or a fresh birth from brute or human mother, it is obvious that there is more difficulty in affirming identity between the new substance and the old. In some cases, if we may trust our authorities, and if we rightly interpret the tales and ritual and beliefs they report, the savage sets this difficulty at defiance: the proofs of identity overcome it. Oftener, it may be, the identity established is of an inner and more elusive self. For want of a better word we call this kernel of a man his soul, or spirit, both of which words connote to us an immaterial object, with none of the attributes of physical existence. To the savage, however, as to our own forefathers, and to the *folk* of all civilised countries still, the idea of an incorporeal soul is incomprehensible. He may not be able to see it at all times; he may not be able to handle it when he will: but this kernel, this inner self, of friend or foe, comes to him in dreams; he beholds it in the snake or the toad, the insect or the dove, that haunts the tomb of one who was dear to him, or in the rose-bush or the lily growing upon the grave; or he fetches it back in the shape of a white stone to his beloved child, who has sickened at its absence, and is like to die. Thus it is everywhere in the lower culture conceived as material, though capable of changing its form and appearance without losing its identity. And this identity is the real identity of the man, suffusing and transfusing his entire being. Hence the dividing line between Transformation and Trans-

migration is frequently so thin and faint. Transmigration as popularly understood (for I am not speaking of the speculations of philosophers, whether Indian or Greek) is a natural and imperceptible development of Transformation. As regards the popular Buddhistic belief of ancient Hindustan I have already shown this from the *Jâtakas*; and what is true of that holds good of other popular forms of belief, at all events where Judaism and its daughter-faiths, Christianity and Mohammedanism, have not too deeply penetrated.

Some races, as we have seen, divide the soul into two or more entities, whereof one alone may be capable of re-manifestation. To discuss the reason for this would lead us away from our subject. It will be enough to suggest that it is an attempt to escape from the dilemma imposed by the meeting of two or more lines of speculation as to the future life. A reconciliation must be attained between the reasoning which would lead to the belief in a place of the dead elsewhere than here, and that which inclines to the opinion that the deceased remains among his friends, or amid his decaying dust, ready and eager to appear again. The divisibility of the inner self succeeds in this object; and if we meet with such a device less frequently than we might expect, it is no doubt because the savage mind, unaccustomed to consecutive and abstract thought, is slow in realising a contradiction, and unwilling to solve the difficulty, unless where circumstances have compelled the attention and the necessary effort.

The study of the belief in the re-incorporation of the soul in a human body has no direct bearing on the legend of Perseus. But some account of it was required to

complete our view of savage thought upon the subject of Transformation by means of death and birth—a subject necessary to be understood in approaching the incident of the Life-token. To that incident we have next to address ourselves.

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